



Consultation on the Draft Former Refugees, Recent Migrants, and Ethnic Communities Employment Action Plan

September 2021



Ministry for
**Ethnic
Communities**
Te Tari Mātāwaka



**MINISTRY OF BUSINESS,
INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT**
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI



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Message from the Minister for Diversity, Inclusion and Ethnic Communities

I am excited to begin consultation on the draft Employment Action Plan for Former refugees, Recent Migrants and Ethnic Communities (Action Plan) that aims to improve employment outcomes for our diverse ethnic communities.

Aotearoa New Zealand is a diverse nation of over 213 ethnicities, who collectively speak over 160 languages and belong to a variety of faith communities. The benefits of diversity are inarguable. Ours is a Government that values diversity and continues to take steps to be more inclusive so that Aotearoa New Zealand reflects the diversity of the people it serves

Despite our growing diversity, former refugees, recent migrants and members from ethnic communities have told Government over many years the challenges they face when it comes to finding meaningful employment, progressing in their careers and feeling that they cannot bring their full identities to work. These issues have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

I want to make sure that our Government takes tangible action to lift employment outcomes for former refugees, recent migrants and ethnic communities, and to support a thriving and resilient economy as we recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Action Plan brings together current and planned programmes of work to help communities to develop their skills, get into work, and to have fulfilling careers.

We are now undertaking consultation on the Action Plan, and specifically the proposed actions. I want to ensure your voices are heard and your views reflected in the final Action Plan that will be published by the end of the year.

We know there's more work to be done ensure that all of us feel safe, valued, heard, have a sense of belonging and are able to participate fully in society. Improving employment outcomes for all is a key step towards this vision.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Ngā mihi nui,

Hon Priyanca Radhakrishnan

Minister for Diversity, Inclusion and Ethnic Communities
Associate Minister for Social Development and Employment



Introduction

This covering document provides a summary of the draft Former Refugees, Recent Migrants and Ethnic Communities Employment Action Plan (the Action Plan) and its actions, how it has been drafted, the purpose of this consultation, and the questions we would like to ask you about the Employment Action Plan.

Background to the Action Plan

In August 2019, the Government launched an Employment Strategy to build a skilled workforce, support industries and regions to thrive, support workplaces to modernise, to support workers and businesses to be resilient, and to support a more inclusive labour market. Under this Strategy, there are seven specific Employment Action Plans. The Action Plan aligns with several Government Priorities including Aotearoa New Zealand's post-COVID-19 economic recovery resilience, and the Refugee Resettlement Strategy and the Migrant Settlement and Integration Strategy.

The Former Refugees, Recent Migrants and Ethnic Communities Employment Action Plan (the Action Plan) is one of these specific Employment Action Plans. There are Plans for Māori, Pacific, Older Workers, Youth, Disabled People and Women.

The Ministry for Ethnic Communities, the Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment are the lead agencies for the Action Plan.

The aim of the Action Plan is to lift the employment outcomes for former refugees, recent migrants and ethnic communities – when compared to the total New Zealand population, these three groups persistently experience poorer employment outcomes due to a range of barriers. The Action Plan brings together current and planned programmes of work to support former refugees, recent migrants, and ethnic communities to develop their skills, get into work, and to have fulfilling careers.

Drafting of the Action Plan

Work on developing the Action Plan began in mid-2019, where the voices of these communities were gathered, and actions added to acknowledge what we heard. Targeted consultation on the Plan was scheduled for early 2020 but was delayed due to COVID-19. The Action Plan and actions have since been updated to ensure they are relevant for the COVID-19 environment, acknowledge the Royal Commission of Inquiry Response into the Terrorist Attack on Christchurch Masjidain on March 15, 2019, and take women's employment into consideration.



Actions developed for the Action Plan

The Action Plan is made up different sections that have:

- Actions to improve employment outcomes for former refugees
- Actions to improve employment outcomes for recent migrants
- Actions to improve employment outcomes for ethnic communities
- Actions to tackle temporary migrant exploitation
- Actions that focus on system improvements (“cross-cutting actions”)

Some of the actions are existing programmes and initiatives, while other actions are new.

While there are already members from ethnic communities who are excelling in the labour market and have good employment outcomes, this Action Plan aims to ensure that everyone can access meaningful employment.

The table below provides an overview of the actions in each section:

	Actions
Former Refugees	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information to support living and working in New Zealand (underway) 2. English Language Provision (underway) 3. Refugee Driver Training Programme (underway) 4. Pathways to Employment (underway) 5. Refugee Pathways and Careers Initiative (underway) 6. Improving Refugee Employment Outcomes Project (underway) 7. Former refugee youths less than 5 years in the New Zealand education system before age 18 – research on the barriers faced for younger refugee youth in connecting to further education and training (underway) 8. Strategic engagement with employers to reduce barriers to employment (underway)
Recent Migrants	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Regional skills matching and job assistance services (underway) 10. Work Connect Programme (underway)
Ethnic Communities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Explore the possibility of promoting volunteering and paid work experience (new) 12. Provide support to graduates from ethnic communities to move into first work opportunity within the public service (underway) 13. Former refugee youths less than 5 years in the New Zealand education system before age18 – research on the barriers faced for younger refugee youth in connecting to further education and training (underway) 14. Work with relevant government agencies to identify actions to reduce both the ethnic pay gap and pay gap for ethnic women (new) 15. Partner with a research institute to better understand barriers to employment for ethnic communities (new)

	Actions
Migrant Worker Exploitation	16. Progressing work to implement Cabinet’s approved legislative, operational and policy changes to address temporary migrant worker exploitation (underway) 17. Implementation of action in the Plan of Action against forced labour, human trafficking and slavery (underway)
Cross-Cutting Actions	18. Improve employment data collection for ethnic communities, including intersectional data (new) 19. Supporting ethnic communities to access all-of-government services information about employment services, including building the capability of staff to be responsive employment needs, and tailoring information and channels for ethnic communities (new) 20. Work with the Ministry of Women, and Ministries for Education, Social Development and Business, Innovation and Employment to understand specific barriers, and to identify and tailor education and employment programmes for women from who are disadvantaged in employment (new) 21. Work with MBIE and leads for other action plans to coordinate engagement with employers; demonstrate the benefits of inclusive and diverse recruitment for businesses; and to develop tools and resources for discrimination free recruitment practices and addressing unconscious bias. This includes working with industry to increase employment opportunities for people from ethnic communities (new)

We want to hear from you

We want to hear your views on the Action Plan and your ideas on what we have heard and what better employment outcomes could look like for your community in the future. Your views and feedback will be used to help us with the proposals in the final Action Plan, which will be considered by the Government.

For each of the Sections in the Plan, we are asking the same set of questions:

- What do you like and/or dislike about the actions in this section? What actions do you think are most important?
- Are there any actions you think are missing in this section?

We also have some general questions that we would like to ask:

- What do you like about the Employment Action Plan? What is missing from the Employment Action Plan? What would success look like for the Plan?
- Has your employment been impacted by COVID-19 (for example have you lost your source of income, or had reduced income as a result of COVID-19)? If so, please describe how it has been affected and whether the actions address the impact.
- Do you have any other feedback?



How to have your say

We are seeking feedback on the draft Action Plan between 27 September 2021 and 31 October 2021. We are asking for feedback through targeted focus group engagements and an online survey.

The online survey questions are the same as those posed with focus groups, and the online survey provides an opportunity for more people to provide feedback from where they are, and when they can between now and the end of October. The closing date for all submissions is 5pm on 31 October 2021. Submissions received after this time will be considered on a case-by-case basis.



You can share your views on the Employment Action Plan using our [online survey](#).



You can also send your responses via email at info@ethniccommunities.govt.nz or post them to:

Ministry for Ethnic Communities
45 Pipitea Street
Thorndon, Wellington, 6011
New Zealand

We will use your feedback to revise the Action Plan. We intend to finalise the Action Plan and publish it by the end of the year. We will also publish an anonymised summary of what we have heard from the consultation as part of the final Plan.

If you have any questions about this engagement, please contact info@ethniccommunities.govt.nz.

Privacy and Official Information Requests

The Privacy Act 2020 governs how the Ministry collects, holds, uses, and discloses any personal information about you and the information you provide.

The feedback you provide on the Employment Action Plan is to help us better understand employment barriers and challenges, and to improve and revise the actions for our Action Plan. The submission data will be disposed of after a period of two years.

Please do not provide personal details about yourself or anyone else when making your submission. If you do supply any personal details, they will be kept confidential in a secure environment. You have the right to access and correct any personal information by emailing info@ethniccommunities.govt.nz.



If you want to remain totally anonymous, please use the online survey as this does not require you to provide an email address.

Data, quotes and insights that you submit to the Ministry may also be used for developing future employment policies, and may be shared with other New Zealand government agencies to help improve employment outcomes for ethnic communities. Any information shared with other agencies or made publicly available will be anonymised.

Your participation (or declining to participate) in this consultation does not provide any benefit, disadvantage, or special treatment in relation to any current or future interactions and applications with the Ministry for Ethnic Communities.

Please note that your submission may be subject to a request to the Ministry of Ethnic Communities for information under the Official Information Act 1982. If you have included some personal details, these can be withheld. If you do not want any information you provide to be released, please let us know and explain why. For example, you may wish to keep some information confidential because it is sensitive personal information. The Ministry of Ethnic Communities will take your views into account when responding to such requests.



Former Refugees, Recent Migrants and Ethnic Communities Employment Action Plan



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Part one – Introduction

In August 2019, the Government launched an Employment Strategy

The Strategy will:

- build a skilled workforce by ensuring the education, immigration, and welfare systems all pull in the same direction to unlock people’s potential and enable businesses to get the skills they need;
- support industries and regions to thrive by ensuring they are well served by the skills and training system;
- support workplaces to modernise by encouraging them to make the most of New Zealand’s increasingly diverse workforce;
- support workers and businesses to be resilient and adaptable in the face of the changing nature of work by making sure New Zealanders have good foundation skills and participate in lifelong learning; and
- support a more inclusive labour market to better enable people to grow their skills and careers and have decent and stable work.

The Strategy is to be supported by seven population specific Employment Action Plans that focus on cohorts of people who consistently experience poor labour market outcomes: youth, disabled people, Māori, Pacific Peoples, older workers, and former refugees, recent migrants and ethnic communities). In April 2021, Cabinet agreed to also develop an action plan focused on women.

The intersections between these cohorts mean that there will often be similar and overlapping employment issues, which could result in some people who are former refugees, recent migrants or from ethnic communities also being covered by other Plans.

A draft action plan was developed for former refugees, recent migrants, and ethnic communities in late 2019

At a high-level, the purpose of this Action Plan is to improve labour market outcomes for former refugees, recent migrants, and ethnic communities. While there are already members from ethnic communities who are excelling in the labour market and have good employment outcomes, this Action Plan aims to ensure that everyone can access meaningful employment.

The draft Action Plan brings together current and planned programmes of work across government to support former refugees, recent migrants, and ethnic communities to develop their skills, get into work, and to have fulfilling careers.

There are a number of existing projects been initiated to support former refugees and recent migrants into employment. These are being developed following extensive consultation with these communities.

To support the humanitarian, whānau, settlement and security outcomes of immigration,

Government increased the annual Refugee Quota, piloted a programme for community organisations to sponsor the settlement of refugees, begun reviewing the system for former refugees to be reunified with their families, expanded a programme for building welcoming communities across the country, reopened the parent resident visa category, and introduced an Electronic Travel Authority and the International Visitor Conservation and Tourism Levy.

The Government also consulted on proposals to take serious action on temporary migrant worker exploitation. Migrant exploitation leads to negative outcomes for migrants, businesses, and our international reputation, and the proposals are aimed at preventing the occurrence of conditions that enable exploitation by protecting migrant workers and enabling them to leave exploitative employment, as well as ensuring better enforcement of immigration and employment law to deter and detect non-compliance.

While there were no tailored employment programmes in place at that time, employment had been raised as a priority for ethnic communities. As part of the development of the Action Plan, several new actions were identified to improve labour market outcomes for ethnic communities.

In December 2019, Cabinet considered the draft Action Plan, with plans for the former Office of Ethnic communities (now Ministry for Ethnic Communities) to undertake targeted consultation with communities between February and April 2020.

Support for employment ramped up in response to COVID19

Consultation on the draft action plan was put on hold during the initial Alert Level 4 lockdown period (Lockdown) in 2020. To cushion the economic impacts of COVID-19 during and following Lockdown, focus was redirected to other priorities, with the Ministry of Social Development focusing on wage subsidies and expanding universal employment support for people who lost jobs or hours, and the Office of Ethnic Communities supporting COVID-19 communications for ethnic communities.

The Employment, Education and Training Ministers' group continues to monitor the impact of COVID19 on employment for different cohorts. In Budget 2020, the government provided substantial investment for improving employment outcomes including:

- a \$1.6 billion trades and apprenticeship package;
- \$121 million for He Poutama Rangatahi;
- \$16 million for Adult and Community Education;
- \$150 million Employment Service Response to COVID-19 over two years to scale up employment programmes; and
- \$54m to scale up employment programmes in the 2020/21 financial year.

Existing active labour market policies were bolstered while some new ones were created in response to COVID-19, for; education and training, employment assistance, and job creation.

Active labour market policies are important levers during times of economic slowdown for those most vulnerable in the labour market such as former refugees, recent migrants and ethnic communities.

Support for a smooth transition to the labour market can have a significant impact on these cohorts, as extended periods of time outside of the labour market or education/training can increase the chance of poor employment outcomes in the longer-term.

Education and Training Active Labour Market Policies

Support for education and training is a crucial stepping stone for people to enter the labour market. Some of the initiatives targeting cohorts include:

- Skill development and work readiness (Training for Work, Skills for Industry, Work Confidence and Motivation Assistance Programmes, MySkill, and Driver Licencing).
- Financial assistance for study/training (Course Participation Assistance, Student Loans for living costs and fees, Fees-Free entitlements, Student Hardship Fund, Training Incentive Allowance).
- Long-term education/training (Youth Guarantee Fees Free).
- Intensive Literacy and Numeracy and the Work Connect Programme.

Employment Assistance Active Labour Market Policies

In some cases, people need support to find the right job. Initiatives to help people find work include:

- Search and information services (Online recruitment tool through Work and Income, Employment Centres).
- Skills matching and brokerage (Transition to Work Grant, Flexi-wage, Job Connect).
- Migrant and former refugee specific support (Pathways to Employment).

Support for people to stay in work includes:

- Financial assistance (childcare subsidy, in-work tax credit, family tax credits).
- Non-financial support (In-work support, Oranga Mahi, Te Heke Mai).

Job Creation Labour Market Policies

New job creation initiatives that were developed in response to COVID-19 include:

- Shovel ready projects (building of state and transitional housing, and other infrastructure projects).
- Jobs for Nature (improving the health of New Zealand's waterways, restoring nature, among others).
- Self-employment support (start-up grant).

Uptake rates of some of the initiatives listed above have been positive so far, with over 130,000 people participating across 16 initiatives that promote employment and re-employment. However, the demographic breakdown of the uptake highlights the need to develop and tailor New Zealand’s active labour market policies, particularly for ethnic minorities who generally have lower uptake across the initiatives.

The Royal Commission of Inquiry reported in December 2020

The Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Terrorist Attack on Christchurch masjidain on 15 March 2019 (Royal Commission) delivered a comprehensive report with 44 recommendations. The Government accepted all the recommendations in principle, and these formed the basis of a work programme aimed at improving outcomes for all New Zealanders, but which would be likely to have a larger impact for targeted communities in this plan.

As part of the broader Government response, the Government established a Ministry for Ethnic Communities in line with recommendation 30 of the Royal Commission report. The new Ministry became operational on 1 July 2021. An Ethnic Communities Graduate Programme was also launched on 12 July 2021 to provide work experience and pathways into the public service to ensure greater diversity in our policy work and decision making. This is one of the actions within this draft Action Plan.

Through the community hui held in response to the Royal Commission, many told the government that a lack of recognition of lived experiences, or requirements for New Zealand-based experience, made it difficult for those from migrant communities to secure employment in New Zealand. They also spoke of barriers faced within workplaces, in the recruitment process and accessing government services.¹

We are now ready to consult on the draft Action Plan

After a delay due to COVID-19, we are now ready to undertake targeted consultation on the Action Plan and seek your feedback on whether the actions planned will help make a tangible impact on the employment outcomes of the targeted cohorts and support the identified cohorts into work.

Since December 2019, this Action Plan has been updated to reflect the impact of COVID-19 on the labour market, acknowledge the Royal Commission’s recommendations and consider how women’s employment outcomes can be supported through this Action Plan.

¹ New Zealand Government (2021): Report on community hui held in response to the Royal Commission into the Terrorist Attack on Christchurch Mosques on 15 March 2019, p. 5. Accessible at: [Report on community hui held in response to the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Terrorist Attack on Christchurch Mosques PDF.docx.pdf \(dpmc.govt.nz\)](#).

This action plan is made up of five sections, which group actions based on specific cohort(s). These sections are:

- Actions that support former refugees
- Actions that support recent migrants
- Actions that support ethnic communities
- Actions that tackle temporary migrant exploitation
- Actions that cut across all cohorts (“cross-cutting actions”)

There will be overlap to a certain extent across the different cohorts, but for the purposes of the Action Plan, these distinct sections are used to group the various actions proposed.

The Action Plan recognises that policy work targeting these different cohorts is at different stages, with consultation and stakeholder engagement completed for refugees and recent migrants. Work on the migrant exploitation work program is underway, and an emerging work programme for ethnic communities is being consulted on in this Employment Action Plan.

The Action Plan recognises that the successful implementation of the actions also requires the support of the private sector. Private sector employers play an important part in promoting diversity and inclusion in the workplace and providing employment opportunities for former refugees, recent migrants and ethnic communities. There is a specific action in this Plan that seeks to begin working with employers on diversity and inclusion.

Summary of Actions

The table below summarises the actions in this Plan:

	Actions
Former Refugees	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information to support living and working in New Zealand (underway) 2. English Language Provision (underway) 3. Refugee Driver Training Programme (underway) 4. Pathways to Employment (underway) 5. Refugee Pathways and Careers Initiative (underway) 6. Improving Refugee Employment Outcomes Project (underway) 7. Former refugee youths less than 5 years in the New Zealand education system before age 18 – research on the barriers faced for younger refugee youth in connecting to further education and training (underway) 8. Strategic engagement with employers to reduce barriers to employment (underway)
Recent Migrants	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Regional skills matching and job assistance services (underway) 10. Work Connect Programme (underway)

	Actions
Ethnic Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Explore the possibility of promoting volunteering and paid work experience (new) 12. Provide support to graduates from ethnic communities to move into first work opportunity within the public service (underway) 13. Former refugee youths less than 5 years in the New Zealand education system before age18 – research on the barriers faced for younger refugee youth in connecting to further education and training (underway) 14. Work with relevant government agencies to identify actions to reduce both the ethnic pay gap and pay gap for ethnic women (new) 15. Partner with a research institute to better understand barriers to employment for ethnic communities (new)
Migrant Worker Exploitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Progressing work to implement Cabinet’s approved legislative, operational and policy changes to address temporary migrant worker exploitation (underway) 17. Implementation of action in the Plan of Action against forced labour, human trafficking and slavery (underway)
Cross-Cutting Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18. Improve employment data collection for ethnic communities, including intersectional data (new) 19. Supporting ethnic communities to access all-of-government services information about employment services, including building the capability of staff to be responsive employment needs, and tailoring information and channels for ethnic communities (new) 20. Work with the Ministry of Women, and Ministries for Education, Social Development and Business, Innovation and Employment to understand specific barriers, and to identify and tailor education and employment programmes for women from who are disadvantaged in employment (new) 21. Work with MBIE and leads for other action plans to coordinate engagement with employers; demonstrate the benefits of inclusive and diverse recruitment for businesses; and to develop tools and resources for discrimination free recruitment practices and addressing unconscious bias. This includes working with industry to increase employment opportunities for people from ethnic communities (new)

Next steps

Targeted consultation on this Action Plan will continue until the end of October 2021. The feedback received will then be analysed and key findings and changes incorporated into the Action Plan before it is published at the end of the year.

The publication of the Action Plan is just the beginning – the actions in the first phase will contribute to building the evidence base and inform further development of new actions for phase 2 of the Action Plan.

There are seven employment action plans that support the Employment Strategy. Where there are common actions or themes across the plans these actions will be developed collectively to avoid duplication of actions and ensure greater coordination across the Government’s labour market priorities.

Questions:

What do you like about the Employment Action Plan? What is missing from the Plan? What would success look like for the Plan?

Has your employment been impacted by COVID-19 (for example have you lost your source of income, or had reduced income as a result of COVID-19)? If so, please describe how it has been affected and whether the actions address the impact.

Do you have any other feedback?

Part two –Former Refugees

This group includes quota and convention refugees

Refugee Quota Programme

Through New Zealand’s Refugee Quota Programme², quota refugees are resettled in the country. In September 2018, the Government agreed to increase the Refugee Quota to 1,500 annually from July 2020, however this programme has been disrupted by COVID-19, with fewer refugees entering New Zealand due to border closures. In May 2021 the Government announced that 100 managed isolation and quarantine (MIQ) places would be reserved for 100 refugees every six weeks between July 2021 and March 2022. However, this limitation means that the quota of 1500 refugees per year will not be met in 2021/2022.

The New Zealand Government makes decisions every three years on New Zealand’s Refugee Quota Programme including the international regions from which refugees will be resettled. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees refers refugees with priority protection needs to New Zealand to consider for resettlement under the Refugee Quota.

“Convention Refugees”

New Zealand is a signatory to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, 1984 Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. As a signatory to these international Conventions and Covenants, New Zealand has an obligation to determine claims for refugee and protected person status claim made by people in New Zealand. People who are determined to be a refugee or protected person are sometimes known as “Convention refugees”. Around 150-250 people are determined to be Convention refugees each year.

Here is what we know about the challenges and barriers for this group

For many former refugees their initial focus in settling in New Zealand is on rebuilding their new lives – moving into new communities and getting to know their local neighbourhood, learning English, setting up homes, enrolling with GPs and enrolling and supporting their children into early childhood centres and education, and accessing medical and mental health treatment and supports.

² <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/about-us/what-we-do/our-strategies-and-projects/refugee-resettlementstrategy> (accessed 25 October 2019)

Employment is critical for successful settlement and part of a former refugees' settlement journey. Employment contributes to self-sufficiency and independence and provides networks and opportunities for greater participation and contribution to the community. Employment also supports all other integration and settlement outcomes.

The New Zealand Refugee Resettlement Strategy (the NZRRS)³ was agreed to by the New Zealand Government in 2012. It is a whole-of-government approach to delivering improved refugee settlement outcomes so that refugees achieve self-sufficiency, social integration and independence.

The overarching outcome for the NZRRS is:

Refugees are participating fully and integrated socially and economically as soon as possible so that they are living independently, undertaking the same responsibilities and exercising the same rights as other New Zealanders and have a strong sense of belonging to their own community and to New Zealand.

This outcome is supported by the following five integration outcomes:

- *Self-sufficiency*: all working-age refugees are in paid work or are supported by a family member in paid work.
- *Participation*: refugees actively participate in New Zealand life and have a strong sense of belonging to New Zealand.
- *Health and wellbeing*: refugees and their families enjoy healthy, safe and independent lives.
- *Education*: refugees' English language skills enable them to participate in education and achieve qualifications, and support them to participate in daily life.
- *Housing*: refugees live independently of government housing assistance in homes that are safe, secure, healthy and affordable.

Progress in improving the integration outcomes is measured annually against seven success indicators and one target (Education) approved by the Government. Baseline data has been established as a basis for assessing subsequent progress. A review and update of the NZRRS outcomes and indicators that monitor them will be beginning in the second half of 2021.

The 2018 Dashboard⁴ shows that the proportion of former refugees in paid employment increased over time, with some variability from cohort to cohort; on average approximately, 26 percent are in paid employment after two years, 35 percent after three years and 43 percent after five years.

Challenges and barriers

Gaining sustainable and meaningful employment is part of the former refugee settlement journey.

Former refugees may face a number of challenges and barriers in gaining employment in New Zealand.

³ <https://www.immigration.govt.nz/documents/refugees/nzrrs-dashboard.pdf> ^[1]

INZ administrative data.

These challenges and barriers may include, at the outset, potential bias within the employment environment, understanding and navigating New Zealand’s employment culture, context and systems (including process for recognition of skills and prior work experiences and accessing ongoing skills development and vocational training) and the requirement for English language skills to access employment. Some former refugees also have barriers in accessing employment due to traumas they have experienced.

In addition, where former refugees are ready to connect to employment they continue to face barriers as employers may not recognise their prior work experience and skills while also requiring New Zealand work experience. There are also disparities in access to specific resettlement services between convention and quota refugees. Convention refugees do not have access to the same wrap around support quota refugees receive and some may be in greater need of employment support. An INZ pilot of a Navigator role designed to support convention refugees was recently evaluated, and an update on this can be provided shortly.

Within this group, we are prioritising working with refugees of working age:

The NZRRS provides the framework for work programmes and approaches to be developed across agencies, settlement service providers and former refugee communities.

Under the NZRSS, the initial priority is to support working age former refugees into sustained and meaningful employment through the development of an integrated approach utilising and building on services and the connections across government agencies. This approach covers:

- strategic engagement with employers to reduce barriers
- assessment and recognition of former refugees’ skills and prior experience in relation to the New Zealand labour market
- continued skills development and learning when in employment, including numeracy, literacy and skills development.

The second phase will focus on younger former refugees who have been in New Zealand’s education system for less than 5 years before the age of 18 years. The focus for this group will be on continued education and training to build their skills for a future career.

We are already doing work on:

Action	Barriers addressed	Outcomes	Responsibility
<p>1. Information to support living and working in New Zealand</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off-shore orientation • Reception programme at the Te Āhuru Mōwai o Aotearoa. • Orientation programme in the settlement locations. 	<p>Limited knowledge of the New Zealand labour market.</p> <p>Mental health concerns stemming from trauma, resettlement difficulties, isolation. Limited knowledge or awareness of available mental health services and supports.</p>	<p>Supports quota refugees to live and work in New Zealand</p>	<p>Multi agency approach, including Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry for Social Development (MSD), Ministry of Health, NZ Police, Ministry for Housing and Urban Development, Kāinga Ora, Ministry for Ethnic Communities (MEC)</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English language provisions • Funding Tertiary Education Providers to provide English language classes for beginners (Levels 1 &2) as well as intensive literacy and numeracy programmes • Refugee English Fund – for former refugees studying Student Achievement Component funded ESOL levels 3 and above. 	<p>Limited language skills for refugees.</p>	<p>Ongoing support for former refugees to develop English language skills to enable them to participate in education and daily life, and access employment opportunities</p>	<p>Tertiary Education Commission (TEC)</p>

Action	Barriers addressed	Outcomes	Responsibility
<p>3. Refugee Driver Training Programme – provides driving lessons and driver training to enable former refugees to obtain their Restricted Licence</p>	<p>Limited mobility for refugees.</p>	<p>Former refugees obtain their Restricted licence</p>	<p>MBIE</p>
<p>4. Pathways to Employment – prepares refugees for employment and connects them to job opportunities</p>	<p>Limited knowledge of the service provided, to ethnic communities. Limited knowledge of the benefits to ethnic communities, and support to secure employment.</p>	<p>To support former refugee, plan their employment, education, training, and career goals.</p>	<p>MSD</p>
<p>5. Refugee Pathways and Careers Initiative – supports Year 10-13 students from refugee Backgrounds to prepare for further education/Employment</p>	<p>Limited knowledge of the service provided, to ethnic communities. Limited knowledge of the benefits to ethnic communities, and support to secure employment.</p>	<p>To support former refugee, plan their employment, education, training, and career goals.</p>	<p>MSD</p>

Further work is planned on:

Action	Barriers Addressed	Outcomes	Responsibility
<p>6. The Refugee Employment Project, including the following key aspects:</p> <p>Pre-employment Development of integrated services to support skills assessment in the context of the New Zealand labour market</p> <p>Connecting to Employment Ongoing careers advice, English language learning in the workplace; preemployment training; mentoring programmes; matching skills to employment opportunities</p> <p>In employment Services to support continued training and development once in employment including numeracy and literacy and continued learning of English language in work training</p>	<p>Limited access to career pathway planning after initial settlement period support ceases</p> <p>Limited English and literacy skills</p> <p>Limited knowledge of New Zealand education and training systems</p>	<p>To support former refugees to prepare for and connect to sustainable meaningful employment that is relevant to their skills and aspirations.</p>	<p>MBIE lead with MSD, TEC, MoE, NZ Qualifications Authority and MEC support</p>

Action	Barriers Addressed	Outcomes	Responsibility
<p>7. Refugee Forum 2019 Pledge work – to support former refugee youth who have less than 5 years in the New Zealand education system before the age of 18 years</p> <p>Research on the barriers faced for younger Refugee Youth in connecting to further education and training</p>	<p>Limited use of secondary school networks and development opportunities</p> <p>Limited knowledge of training options available</p>	<p>Support former refugee youth into further education and/or training to build their skills for future career pathway.</p>	<p>Multi agency approach</p>
<p>8. Strategic engagement with employers to reduce barriers to employment, support former refugees into meaningful and sustained employment and support ongoing training and skills development</p>	<p>Limited understanding of refugee employee population and employment needs amongst employers.</p>	<p>Ease key barriers to obtaining employment including through working strategically with employers.</p>	<p>MBIE</p>

Further work items will be developed after the scheduled refresh of the NZRRSS is completed.

Our key stakeholders are:

Key stakeholders include former refugee communities, non-governmental organisations, settlement service providers and funding government agencies such as the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education Commission, New Zealand Qualifications Authority, and the Ministry for Ethnic Communities.

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment leads this work

MBIE works in partnership with the Ministry of Social Development and with other agencies to deliver support to former refugees.

Questions:

What do you like (and don't like) about the actions for former refugees? What actions do you think are most important?

Are there any actions you think are missing?

Part three – Recent migrants

This group includes migrants who arrived within the last five years

Recent migrants are those who have been living in New Zealand for five years or less.

The New Zealand Migrant Settlement and Integration Strategy (the NZMSIS) is the Government's cross-agency approach to settle and integrate recent migrants in New Zealand. Work to support the NZMSIS focuses on recent migrants living in New Zealand on a permanent or long-term basis.

As at 31 May 2021, there were 275,800 recent migrants in New Zealand. Recent migrants on Resident visas constitute 32 percent of these number. Seventy five percent of recent migrants on Resident visas are from the working-age population (i.e. aged 15 years or over). The top five nationalities of recent migrants are: India, the Philippines, South Africa, China and the United Kingdom.

Immigration policy settings drive migrant employment. The employment rate of recent migrants shows an upward trend over time and, in general, is similar to the New Zealand-born population. In the year ended June 2018, 69 percent of recent migrants were in employment, which is similar to the New Zealand-born population (68 percent). The estimated number of recent migrants in employment is 163,000 (out of 237,000 in the working-age recent migrant population).

Recent migrants that may experience challenges in accessing employment are Pacific migrants (this group is included in the Pacific Peoples action plan) and secondary applicants (these are the partner and/or dependent children included in a principal applicant's residence application).

Secondary applicants are more likely to be female, which contributes to their lower employment rate and higher unemployment rate than male recent migrants.

What we know about the challenges and barriers for this group

In the 2019 Migrant Survey, 85 per cent of recent migrants were working for a wage or salary and 7 per cent of recent migrants were unemployed. ⁴A majority of recent migrants said their current role in their main job matched their skills and qualification. ⁵The key reasons recent migrants believed their role did not match their skills and qualification were because they could not get a job in the area of their skills / qualifications (35 per cent) or because they were over qualified for their current role (28 per cent).

Compared to the overall population of recent migrants, those who are less likely to be working for a wage or salary include those aged over 50 years and visa holders of skilled secondary applicants, family partners or family parents.

⁴ MBIE Settling in New Zealand: Migrant Survey Trends from 2015 to 2019.

⁵ MBIE Settling in New Zealand: Migrant Survey Trends from 2015 to 2019.

In addition, Family Stream migrants and skilled secondary migrants are more likely to report difficulty finding work including challenges related to the lack of New Zealand work experience.⁶

According to the migrant consultations undertaken in 2018, employment was identified as an area where migrants have experienced the most challenges while settling in New Zealand. These challenges include pursuing employment opportunities, understanding and adjusting to the New Zealand workplace. Partners of both resident visa and work visa holders were much more likely to have found employment challenging.⁷

The key barriers identified by employers for employing migrants include workplace culture and communication, highlighting the importance of ongoing education and support for migrants and employers in this area.⁸

Recent migrants also experience challenges in the workforce due to exploitation. Recent migrants tend to experience exploitation in the forms of threatening behaviour from employers such as employers holding back or threatening to hold back entitlements like holiday pay or sick leave and employers asking migrants to pay money to get or keep their job.⁹

What works for recent migrants?

The NZMSIS identifies five measurable outcome areas that are key for successful settlement: employment, education and training, English language, inclusion and health and wellbeing. Each area has a high-level outcome statement that contributes to the Overarching Outcome: *Migrants make NZ their home, participate fully and contribute to all aspects of NZ life.*

While MBIE leads the implementation of the NZMSIS, a number of Government agencies collaborate on the development of an annual cross-government workplan of settlement services and projects that support each of the NZMSIS' five outcome areas. The actions/services outlined in the 'work underway' section below support the NZMSIS employment outcome, and contribute to the high-level outcome statement for Employment: *Working-age migrants have work that matches their skills and NZ-ready qualifications.*

A review and update of the NZMSIS measurable outcomes is beginning in the second half of 2021.

Internationally and nationally, recent migrant settlement is recognised as a two-way process.¹⁰

⁶ MBIE, *Migrants Survey*, 2016.

⁷ MBIE, *National Migrant Consultations*, 2018.

⁸ Auckland Chamber of Commerce, *New Kiwis Employers' Survey*, April 2018.

⁹ MBIE *Settling in New Zealand: Migrant Survey Trends from 2015 to 2019*.

¹⁰ For example, OECD, *Settling In 2018: Indicators of Immigrant Integration*, 2018 and MBIE, *National Survey of Employers 2017/18*, February 2019.

Increasing employers' awareness of the settlement process and the benefits of employing migrants positively influences migrants' employment outcomes and work experiences. Assisting employers to leverage and retain the skills and talents of migrants, once employed, is also important. MBIE undertakes an annual National Survey of Employers.¹¹ The Survey asks questions about the hiring of recent migrant staff and employer attitudes towards the economic benefits that migrants bring. Knowing and understanding the difficulties experienced by employers helps to target two-way settlement services and resources, and ultimately helps them to retain migrant staff.

We are already doing work on:

The following actions support the NZMSIS Employment outcome.¹²

Action	Barriers Addressed	Objectives / indicators	Responsibility
<p>9. Regional Skills matching and job assistance services: Six service providers (in seven regions) provide face-to-face and/or online assistance to migrants, along with advice and support for employers registered in the databases. (Funded until 30 June 2022)</p>	Limited connections to regional job opportunities. Limited understanding and access to migrant skills and labour pool for regional employers	Job-seeking migrants and secondary applicants are matched with businesses that need their skills.	MBIE
<p>10. Work Connect Programme: Provides skilled migrants with career management competencies to understand and promote their unique set of skills, experience and qualifications in a New Zealand context. (Funded until 30 June 2022)</p>	Limited awareness of New Zealand employment context or opportunities. Limited access to New Zealand employment networks	Programme participants are equipped to locate, secure and remain in employment.	TEC

¹¹ MBIE, *National Survey of Employers 2017/18*, February 2019.

¹² It should be noted that there are a number of settlement services that support one NZMSIS outcome, but contribute to other outcomes. For example, the Ministry of Education funds a Bilingual Support Workers programme in schools that supports the NZMSIS Education outcome for migrant children; but it can also lead to employment outcomes for the bilingual support workers involved.

Further work is planned on:

Further work will be planned after the scheduled refresh of the overall NZMSIS strategy in the second half of 2021. The proposed cross-cutting actions in this Action Plan will also support improving outcomes for recent migrants.

Our key agencies are:

A NZMSIS Interagency Reference Group collaborates on the provision of advice to Senior Officials and Ministers on settlement-related policy, annual workplans, service purchase and delivery. Membership of the Group comprises approximately fifteen Government agencies. The agencies that are responsible for current work supporting the NZMSIS Employment outcomes include MBIE, MSD and TEC. The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment leads this work and works with an interagency reference group (outlined above) to deliver support for this population.

Questions:

What do you like (and don't like) about the actions for recent migrants? What actions do you think are most important?

Are there any actions you think are missing?

Part four – Ethnic Communities

Ethnic communities include people living and born in New Zealand who are of Asian, Continental European, Middle Eastern, Latin American and African descent

According to the 2018 Census, ethnic communities make up 20% of people in New Zealand. When the Office of Ethnic Communities (OEC) was established, Cabinet agreed that its mandated communities include new migrants, refugees, long-term settlers, and those born in New Zealand who identify their ethnicity as Asian, Continental European, and Middle Eastern, Latin American and African (MELAA). Temporary migrants are also included under this definition. The Ministry for Ethnic Communities, which supersedes the former Office of Ethnic Communities, has the same mandated communities.

What we know about the challenges and barriers for ethnic communities

Ethnic Communities are not a homogenous group. They are made up of over 200 different ethnic groups, and a mix of people who have recently arrived in New Zealand including international students and workers, people who have been living here most of their lives, and families who have been living here for several generations. It also includes a proportion of refugees and recent migrants, discussed in the previous two sections above.

The diversity within ethnic communities in New Zealand creates challenges for collecting and monitoring data for this group. The best source of data is the Census, and administrative data on subgroups within the community – however, the collection of both ethnicity data and data on ethnic communities is not comprehensive, which means that it is difficult to measure the outcomes of employment policies on ethnic communities.

Understanding and identifying the challenges, barriers and opportunities to get into work, is complex because subgroups of ethnic communities have different experiences, which may also relate to their gender, cultural and religious practices, and expectations about employment.

While there are data gaps, there is rich qualitative information from ethnic communities about the barriers and support they require, and a need to respond to the issues raised by these communities. Over time, the common challenges and barriers that have been consistently raised with government by ethnic communities include:

- Skills and experience:
 - Limited English language skills
 - Lack of relevant skills and education
 - Non-transferable or not easily recognised overseas qualifications and experience
 - Confidence and employment readiness
 - Limited knowledge of New Zealand labour market and pathways to employment, and understanding of their rights as employees

- Discrimination and cultural differences:
 - Workplace and community discrimination, stigma, and stereotyping
 - Employer unconscious bias and fear of the unknown
 - Employers' views that they need New Zealand qualifications and work experience
 - Family/ cultural/ religious expectations which impact on employment (e.g. gender separation)
 - Lack of employer understanding of the benefits of diversity
- Financial or social capital barriers:
 - Personal and family resources (clothes, transport etc)
 - Limited social, community, and employment networks
 - Less understanding of New Zealand systems (such as safe and reliable transport)
 - Lack of culturally appropriate services to support people into work.

Research from the then Office of Ethnic Affairs in 2013 on migrant women entrepreneurship noted that many ethnic women face the prospect of being discriminated against on the basis of factors such as appearance and juggle further challenges, such as the demands of their young and growing families, infants and aging dependants, who are themselves often facing the demands and challenges of settling in a new country.

In June and July 2019, the then Minister for Ethnic Communities hosted a series of dialogues with Muslim communities, including Imams and male leaders, and women and youth. We heard very clearly that Muslims, especially women who wear the hijab or burqa, face additional barriers entering and progressing in the labour market, particularly in the private sector. There was a strong feeling that employers have limited understanding of Muslim employees' needs. Other ethnic groups, such as the Sikh community report similar experiences in the labour market around their wearing of turbans.

In April and May 2021, the then Office for Ethnic Communities undertook engagement on the priorities for the new Ministry for Ethnic Communities. Reducing the barriers to employment for Ethnic Communities was a strong theme that was raised by the community. Responses discussed the importance of gaining more equitable employment and trade opportunities, and many held a strong desire for overseas qualifications to be recognised more easily in Aotearoa New Zealand. The ability for employers and society to support ethnic communities to enter and flourish in workplaces was also cited as a key desire, including correct name pronunciation, education on the value of migrant workers and finding opportunities for migrant workers.¹³

¹³ Ministry for Ethnic Communities (2021): Engagement on the Ministry for Ethnic Communities, p. 17.
Accessible at: [Engagement-on-the-Ministry-for-Ethnic-Communities-1-7-21.pdf \(ethniccommunities.govt.nz\)](#)

Applications for the Ethnic Communities Graduate Programme (Programme) illustrate the enormous talent and experience within ethnic communities. The number of applications also highlight the high demand for opportunities within the public service. For the first two intakes of the Programme (which began this year), 449 applications were received for an estimated 40 placements. While 152 applications were not progressed because they did not meet other assessment criteria(s)/eligibility criteria though their background, qualifications and experience more closely match the criteria sought, 136 applicants were assessed as suitable but were not considered because there were not enough placements.¹⁴

Getting an initial opportunity through paid work experience like the graduate programme, volunteering, or employment can make the difference for individuals to prove their capability and overcome some of the challenges and barriers above.

Based on the Public Sector Workforce data from 2020, there has been a steady increase in representation of employees from Asian and Middle Eastern, Latin American and African (MELAA) backgrounds. Māori, Pacific and Asian employees are overrepresented in the occupation groups that receive low pay. There was no data for the MELAA group. This indicates that there is still more to do to address the ethnic pay gap in the public sector. Asian public sector employees also tended to have a younger age profile than Pākeha employees, which highlights this growing diversity. While diversity is increasing amongst younger employees, career progression and development is crucial for this diversity to flow through to senior leadership level.

This is a five year Action Plan, and within this group, we are prioritising working with specific cohorts:

During the first 18 months (first phase of the plan), we are prioritising:

- People from a range of ethnicities who experience multiple barriers to employment (such as English as a second language, lack of New Zealand work experience or qualifications, limited knowledge of the New Zealand labour market, transport, stable housing, childcare, or funding for work clothes or essential equipment (e.g. work boots), literacy and numeracy challenges, trauma, discrimination based on ethnicity or religion, or disability) and those who may also be socially isolated
- People who are transitioning from education into employment and have finished tertiary study in the last eighteen months
- People who are looking to progress in their careers and are experiencing barriers, such as lack of networks, discrimination based on ethnicity or religion, English as a second language, access to mentors and leadership development opportunities, and understanding of pathways for career progression.

¹⁴ An unsuccessful candidate is someone who was not selected for an interview for Intake 1, or consideration for Intake 2 when they applied.

Phase one of the action plan will include:

Action	Barriers Addressed	Objectives / indicators	Responsibility
<p>11. Explore the possibility of promoting volunteering and paid work experience</p>	<p>Limited social, community, and employment networks</p> <p>Limited work experience in New Zealand</p> <p>Limited knowledge of the New Zealand labour market requirements</p>	<p>Increased volunteering and paid work experience by ethnic communities</p> <p>Increased community connection and social inclusion</p> <p>Increased skills and work readiness</p> <p>Increased evidence base</p>	<p>MEC, MBIE, DIA, MSD</p>
<p>12. Provide support to graduates from ethnic communities to move into their first work opportunity within the public service</p>	<p>Limited knowledge of New Zealand labour market and pathways to employment</p> <p>Limited social, community, and employment networks</p>	<p>15 – 30 graduate opportunities created within 18 months</p> <p>Improved confidence and employment readiness</p> <p>Increased diversity and inclusion and cultural competency across the public sector</p>	<p>MEC</p>
<p>13. Former refugee youth¹⁵ who have less than 5 years in the New Zealand education system before the age of 18 years</p> <p>Research on the barriers faced by younger Refugee Youth in connecting to further education and training</p>	<p>Limited use of secondary school networks and development opportunities</p> <p>Limited knowledge of training options available</p>	<p>Support former refugee youth into further education and/or training to build their skills for future career pathway</p>	<p>Multi-agency approach – MBIE, MSD, TEC, MoE, NZQA</p>
<p>14. Work with relevant government agencies to identify actions to reduce both the ethnic pay gap and pay gap for ethnic women</p>	<p>Limited career progression</p>	<p>Measurable reduction in pay gap for ethnic women in the public sector</p>	<p>Multiagency approach, including Public Service Commission and Ministry for Women</p>

¹⁵ This action is also included as action 8 in the referee section.

Action	Barriers Addressed	Objectives / indicators	Responsibility
15. Partner with a research institute to better understand barriers to employment for ethnic communities	Limited data on ethnic communities and research into employment outcomes for ethnic communities	Improved understanding of the barriers to employment for ethnic communities and the impact of COVID-19 lockdown on ethnic businesses Improved data on ethnic communities' employment experiences and outcomes	MEC lead

Further work is planned:

Further actions for phase two will be developed by the Ministry for Ethnic Communities, MSD, MBIE and other relevant agencies by March 2023, and in partnership with ethnic communities.

Working with Key Stakeholders

The Ministry for Ethnic Communities will work alongside ethnic community organisations across New Zealand who we have established connections with. This includes peak body associations, cultural groups, local councils, advocacy organisations, regional multicultural associations, service providers and charitable trusts.

The Ministry for Ethnic Communities leads this work.

The Ministry will work with MSD, MBIE and Education agencies to deliver the actions to improve employment outcomes for ethnic communities.

Questions:

What do you like and/or dislike about the actions for ethnic communities? What actions do you think are most important?

Are there any actions you think are missing?

Part five –Migrant Worker Exploitation

This group includes temporary migrant workers

The term ‘temporary migrant worker’ refers to migrants without residence status living in New Zealand. This may include migrants in New Zealand as working holiday makers, international students studying and working in New Zealand, Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) workers, essential skills and skilled migrant visa holders. ‘Temporary migrant worker in an employment context’ encompasses migrants without a permanent right to remain in New Zealand, and includes international students.

Here is what we know about the challenges and barriers

Approximately 214,000 temporary migrant workers are currently in New Zealand (from Migration Data Explorer for year ending 30 April 2021). This number includes those holding work visas (around 187,500) and international students (around 52,000; approximately half of whom have visas with work rights). Workers from India, the Philippines and China currently form the largest groups of temporary migrant workers by country of origin. The number of temporary migrant workers at risk of exploitation, or who are being exploited, is difficult to determine due to the hidden nature of exploitation.

Migrant worker exploitation has serious, negative outcomes for migrant workers, the labour force more generally, businesses, and New Zealand as a whole.

- Migrants Exploited – migrant workers can suffer physical, psychological and financial harm. For example, some workers experience controlling and coercive behaviours from their employers, such as surveillance while working, control of their accommodation and movement, intimidation, and threats related to their immigration status. This harm extends to their families both within New Zealand and in their home country and compounds the financial losses suffered.
- Businesses and employers – Good businesses and employers are undercut by exploitative employers. This may make some businesses unsustainable.
- New Zealand citizens and residents – Exploitation undermines work and working conditions for all New Zealanders, and is associated with crimes that affect the wider community, such as fraud and money laundering. Exploitation also puts pressure on New Zealand’s tax and healthcare systems.
- New Zealand’s international reputation – Migrant exploitation damages our international reputation as a non-corrupt, safe place to work and live. It can damage our ability to attract and retain the migrant workers New Zealand wants and needs.

Independent research commissioned by MBIE identified several kinds of exploitation that temporary migrant workers may be subject to. Key types of exploitation identified in the research include the under-payment or non-payment of wages; non-compliance by employers with employment agreements and other documentation (such as by inflating job descriptions and wages for immigration purposes); the non-payment of Pay as You Earn (PAYE) taxes; denial of entitlement to annual holidays; and the non-payment of holiday pay.

Several of the migrant workers participating in the independent research had been required to pay their employer to work for them, in return for the promise of employment that would qualify them for an essential skills or residence visa. The research found that exploitation appeared to occur most frequently with employer-assisted temporary work visas and student visas, including both essential skills and post-study work visas. This was prior to the November 2018 changes which replaced the employer-assisted post-study work visa with a post-study open work visa.

Migrants on employer-assisted temporary work visas can be vulnerable due to their dependency on their employer to maintain their visa status. For those on student visas, exploitation can begin in their home country where they are encouraged to come to New Zealand with promises of jobs leading to permanent residence. In practice, many then find it difficult to obtain a job and become vulnerable to exploitation. This may be exacerbated by debts they have incurred to travel to and study in New Zealand.

We are working with all temporary migrant workers:

The review's changes are focused on reducing the exploitation of *temporary migrant workers*. This includes those on work visas and student visas with work rights. International students as a subset of temporary migrant workers are a particularly vulnerable section of the workforce working in New Zealand on a temporary basis.

Temporary migrant workers often work in industries or sectors where employers have had higher rates of non-compliance with minimum employment standards. Some of these sectors include retail, hospitality and horticulture. Migrant workers are more reluctant to report their exploitation for a number of reasons, including fear of losing their visa if they come forward, if their visa is connected to an employer or they are in breach of their visa conditions.

While the review focuses on temporary migrant workers, changes made to address this exploitation are expected to have a positive outcome for all workers, businesses and employers in New Zealand.

The Government recently announced a set of changes that will support its objectives for the labour market and the immigration system to:

- Ensure that migrants are only recruited for genuine shortages, and employers across New Zealand can access the skills and labour they need.
- Increase expectations on employers to employ and train more New Zealanders.
- Reduce exploitation of temporary migrants and misuse of the immigration system.
- Create better connections between the immigration, education/skills and welfare systems
- Make the labour and immigration system easier to navigate.

The Government's objective for temporary visas is to ensure that first priority should go to New Zealand workers and that temporary workers are only recruited when there are genuine shortages. This requires a system that checks whether a New Zealander is available for an individual job. There will therefore continue to be a link between the employer and job recruited for, and the foreign worker being recruited. However, the recently announced changes will put more emphasis on ensuring that only compliant employers are able to be accredited to recruit migrant workers.

We are already doing work on:

Action	Barriers addressed	Outcomes	Responsibility
<p>16. Progressing work to implement Cabinet’s approved legislative, operational and policy changes to address temporary migrant worker exploitation, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introducing the Migrant Worker Protection Bill in late 2021 • Changes to the employer assisted temporary work visa system • Establishing a new 0800 phone number for reporting exploitation (operational as of 1 July 2021) • Creating a new visa to enable migrant workers to leave situations of exploitation (operational as of 1 July 2021) 	<p>Migrant workers may not know how to report exploitation or find reporting exploitation to be difficult</p> <p>Potential reluctance from migrant workers to report exploitation out of fear of adverse consequences</p> <p>Gaps in immigration and employment systems which might enable to employers to exploit migrant workers</p>	<p>The changes aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent the occurrence of workplace conditions that might enable temporary migrant worker exploitation. • Protect temporary migrant workers in New Zealand and enable them to leave exploitative employment. • Enforce immigration and employment law to deter employer noncompliance through a fit-for-purpose offence and penalty regime. 	<p>MBIE, International Labour Policy team (lead for Review)</p>
<p>17. Implementation of the actions in the Plan of Action against forced labour, human trafficking and slavery. The Plan of Action has a reference group made up of a wide range of key stakeholders who meet every 6 months to support the effective development, delivery and implementation of the plan</p>	<p>Coordinating government response to issues of forced labour, people trafficking and slavery</p>	<p>The Plan of Action aims to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Zealand implements measures to meet its international commitments and prevent the conditions that enable forced labour, people trafficking and slavery. • New Zealand works to proactively identify victims and supports them to safety and recovery by putting their needs at the heart of our responses. 	<p>MBIE lead</p>

Action	Barriers addressed	Outcomes	Responsibility
17.... continued		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The enforcement tools available to disrupt exploitation and hold people to account, particularly through prosecution, are effectively used. <p>Updates on key achievements will be published annually.</p>	

Our key stakeholders are:

A consultation group comprising of representatives from the migrant, business, union and international student sectors was established to support the Review through providing advice along with an independent view.

Questions:

*What do you like and/or dislike about the actions for tackling temporary migrant exploitation?
What actions do you think are most important?*

Are there any actions you think are missing?

Part six –Cross cutting actions

Why Cross Cutting Actions

There are a number of common challenges experienced across the target groups within the Action Plan and other Action Plans under the Strategy (for example, older workers or disabled people).

As a result, we have developed some actions that, if improved at a system-wide level, should maximise employment outcomes for former refugees, recent migrants, ethnic communities and migrants who experience or are at risk of exploitation. Many of these challenges will also be common for the other population groups which have a specific Employment Action Plan.

As these are system-wide initiatives, the lead agencies will work across government and sectors. Over the next 18 months, agencies will further scope out the initiatives that may fall within each of these actions. Where possible, opportunities to align any initiatives or programmes with those of other Employment Action Plans will be explored to ensure a connected all-of-government approach to addressing employment barriers.

As part of this next phase, we will undertake further analysis of the diversity of sectors in the labour market. This analysis will help government identify potential sectors that it could partner with to achieve greater diversity in its workforce, for example through training or apprenticeships.

Further planned work:

Action	Barriers Addressed	Outcomes	Responsibility
18. Improve employment data collection for ethnic communities including intersectional data	<p>Limited and decentralised collection of data on ethnicity and ethnic communities, especially disaggregated data</p> <p>Limited evidence base for policy interventions</p> <p>Data is collected for other purposes and people do not always disclose their ethnicity (e.g. for a benefit)</p> <p>Where there is data available, it is often only available at high level ethnic groupings only, due to privacy considerations, which may mask issues for specific subgroups</p>	<p>Common data standards in place across agencies</p> <p>Increased collection of ethnicity data, and data on ethnic communities by agencies</p> <p>Improved data for decision making and policy interventions</p> <p>Improved understanding of barriers specific to, e.g. sectors, subgroups, age groups, regions etc</p>	Multi-agency approach

Action	Barriers Addressed	Outcomes	Responsibility
<p>19. Supporting ethnic communities to access all-of-government services information about employment services, including building the capability of staff to be responsive to employment needs, and tailoring information and channels for ethnic communities</p>	<p>Lack of knowledge or understanding of services that are available</p> <p>Unconscious bias from government employees</p> <p>Language barriers</p> <p>Limited knowledge of how to support ethnic communities living in New Zealand</p> <p>Limited resources tailored to the needs of specific communities</p>	<p>Improved understanding of, and confidence to navigate, the employment services available</p> <p>Greater uptake in services by target groups</p> <p>Improved employment outcomes for former refugees, recent migrants and ethnic communities</p> <p>Increased information available in different languages and channels from sources that ethnic communities trust</p>	<p>MSD, MEC</p>
<p>20. Work with the Ministry of Women, and Ministries for Education, Social Development and Business, Innovation and Employment to understand specific barriers, and to identify and tailor education and employment programmes for women from who are disadvantaged in employment</p>	<p>We expect that women in these target groups experience intersectional challenges in accessing and engaging with employment, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited knowledge of New Zealand labour market and pathways to employment, and understanding of their rights as employees • Limited social, community, and employment networks • Potentially limited financial or personal resources to work (e.g. transport) or inflexible work if childcaring 	<p>Increased uptake of universal services (including childcare) by ethnic women</p> <p>Improved employment outcomes for women, including increase in number of women from target groups in quality employment</p> <p>Government services and programmes are more responsive to employment needs, of ethnic women</p>	<p>Multi-agency approach</p>

Action	Barriers Addressed	Outcomes	Responsibility
<p>21. Work with the Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment and leads for other Action Plans to coordinate engagement with employers; demonstrate benefits of inclusive and diverse recruitment for businesses; and to develop tools and resources for discrimination free recruitment practices and addressing unconscious bias. This includes working with industry to increase employment opportunities for people from ethnic communities</p>	<p>Lack of awareness and understanding of the talent pool available within ethnic communities</p> <p>Non-transferable or not easily recognised overseas qualifications and experience</p> <p>Employers have unconscious bias and views that they need New Zealand qualifications and work experience</p>	<p>Improved understanding of the value of diversity and inclusion</p> <p>Removal of barriers in recruitment</p> <p>Increase in number of people from target groups in quality employment</p> <p>Reduced incidences of discrimination in the workplace</p>	<p>Multi-agency approach</p>

Questions:

What do you like and/or dislike about the cross-cutting actions? What actions do you think are most important?

Are there any actions you think are missing?
