

# **NZEE Worker Voice Survey 2025**

## **Three Year Trend Report (2021- 2023 - 2025)**

### **Executive Summary**

In August 2025, member employers of NZEE carried out a Worker Voice Survey, facilitated by [Ulula](#). The worker voice survey is done every 18 months, and helps NZEE members identify and address Labour Rights issues in the workplace. Feedback is anonymous, ensuring workers can respond safely and honestly. 24 questions were made available in 8 languages, it was open for 2 weeks, and accessible via smartphone, tablet, laptop or desktop.

The **2025 NZEE Worker Survey** results show strong, sustained performance across most areas. In 2025 we've largely held or improved on the high scores recorded in 2023, progress compared with 2021 is even more striking. Importantly, participation has grown by 30%, giving greater confidence that these findings reflect the real experiences and voices of our workforce, and shows the increased level of trust workers have in this tool.

Our real strengths are clear, workers overwhelmingly know who employs them, receive proper safety training, and feel safe both at work and in their employer provided accommodation. Signed contracts before they start working are standard practice, people feel respected, and they have confidence in their team leaders to speak up on their behalf if they need to them to. Access to safe & clean bathroom facilities, their own legal documentation, and accurate timesheets & pay are also consistently high.

The biggest improvements over the past three years can be seen in workplace respect, safety, correct pay, accurate timesheets, and the ability to raise a complaint. These gains highlight the effort put into strengthening fairness, transparency, and accountability.

There are still some areas that need attention. Perceived support for health has dropped since the last survey, suggesting that wellbeing initiatives need refresh focus. The ability for workers to say "no" to extra hours remains flat and continues to be the lowest scoring measure. Some additional feedback that workers may not literally mean they feel they are unable to refuse extra hours; but this low score may reflect a cultural or personal reluctance to say "no".

Finally, while more people report they have enough money after deductions, this measure is still lagging compared with the stronger indicators like safety, contracts, and respect at work. This gap may point to external pressures, like the general increase in the cost of living, rather than internal failings, but it's good to have this highlighted.

Overall, the core rights are firmly in place:

- People know who employs them and where they stand, a cornerstone of the right to decent work
- They report feeling safe both in their workplace and accommodation, reflecting their right to a safe and healthy environment.
- Workers have secure access to their own documentation and contracts, which speaks directly to freedom of movement and protection against exploitation.
- Just as importantly, they are represented through team leaders and complaint pathways, ensuring their voices can be heard and their rights defended in practice, not just on paper.

The next steps are to continue to build on these foundations by strengthening wellbeing support, ensuring workers feel truly empowered around rest and holidays, and supporting financial awareness & budgeting.

# NZEE Worker Voice Survey 2025

## Forced Labour Indicators

When reviewing for forced labour risks in our worker voice survey we specifically monitor the International Labour Organization (ILO) indicators, including excessive overtime, retention of documents, and restriction of movement. The latest survey results show no evidence of forced labour practices.

While the survey identified some concerns around the ability of workers to decline extra hours, these do not meet the threshold of forced labour as defined by the ILO. Excessive overtime is one of the recognised indicators, but it only constitutes forced labour when combined with coercion, threats, or a lack of genuine choice.

Our [NZEE Human Rights Policy](#) and [NZEE Workplace and Supplier Standards](#) make it clear that forced labour (any work exacted under threat or coercion) is strictly prohibited (see below clause). This is directly supported by the clause on Working Hours (see below), which sets out clear limits on weekly hours, requires that overtime is always voluntary, and guarantees adequate rest and leave.

The **Policy** and **Standards** set out clear expectations for all NZEE members, to ensure that workers are not only free from coercion but also protected from excessive working hours that could amount to exploitation.

### **EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS FORCED LABOUR**

*Forced labour is defined as all work or service which is exacted from any person under the threat of a penalty and for which the person has not offered him or herself voluntarily.*

*NZEE, members and suppliers must not use forced labour, whether in the form of prison labour, indentured labour, bonded labour or otherwise, or allow the trafficking in persons for the purposes of forced labour. No employee may be compelled to work through force or intimidation of any form, or as a means of political coercion or as punishment for holding or expressing political views. No employer shall keep any identity documents and/or passports nor restrict the freedom of movement of any person*

### **WORKING HOURS**

*Employees of NZEE, its members and suppliers must not be expected, except in extraordinary circumstances, to work more than sixty (60) hours per week including overtime or the local legal requirement, whichever is less. A regular work week must not exceed 48 hours excluding overtime. All overtime work must be consensual and not requested on a regular basis. Employees must be allowed at least twenty-four (24) consecutive hours rest within every seven-day period and must receive paid annual leave and other leave entitlements where required by New Zealand Laws.*

*However, employees are expected to work extended hours or irregular hours during peak or harvesting season. Such season shall not exceed 12 weeks per calendar year nor more than 14 hours per day or more than 72 hours per week and on no more than 18 continuous working days.*

*Hours of work records for each employee must be accurately recorded and kept and each employee shall be entitled to access their work records.*

Mitigation steps have been recommended to strengthen worker choice around overtime, and we continue to monitor this closely as part of our ongoing due diligence.

## **NZEE Worker Voice Survey**

### **Mitigation Next Steps 6–12 Months**

#### **Right to Rest and Leisure - make it clear that saying no to overtime is okay**

Make it clear that workers they can decline overtime without fear. Add this to every induction. Supervisors re-brief teams, consider an opt-in/out form if overtime is offered, and monitor rosters. Posters in lunchrooms reminding staff “you have the right to say no to overtime” may also reinforce

### **Recommendations & Suggestions**

#### **Right to Health - put health support back on the front foot**

Strengthen proactive health support with regular check ins, you might not be able to facilitate an on-site clinic, but you can ask how people are. Consider offering flu vaccinations or reach out to a local physio for a drop-in morning every few weeks. Mental health poster in workers’ own languages are an easy way to show care. Consider including the simple [“Your health and safety rights and responsibilities”](#) two pager from WorkSafe in accommodations, and at induction.

#### **Right to an Adequate Standard of Living - help workers stretch their money further**

While this is a tricky one, there are simple ways of supporting workers in managing their earnings, without telling them what to do. Some members provide pre-season budgeting workshops. Consider a mid-season check in with them, to see how their finances are going. Make sure any deduction sheets are in their own language. Highlight low-fee remittance options to protect income sent home.

#### **Right to Just and Favourable Conditions of Work - keep payroll and timesheets watertight**

Maintain trust in pay and hours with regular Payroll Audits and Payroll Training. Consider a text-to-correct system, an easy way to raise a question if something doesn’t look right on their payslip. Some members have a three-day correction standard when issues arise.

#### **Right to Remedy - make complaint pathways easy and trusted**

Strengthen confidence in grievance mechanisms. Create posters about the complaints process and add it to team talks each quarter. Train/refresh team leaders/supervisors on your internal escalation process. Ensure your process includes feedback to the worker, how their concerns were addressed, including your worker survey results & next steps for your business.

#### **Right to Safe and Healthy Work Conditions - keep safety gains alive**

Keep safety culture alive by identifying “safety champions”. Share short video refreshers. Rewarding near-miss reporting. Deliver seasonal refresher training, consider local refresher driver training.

## NZEE Worker Voice Survey

### Notable Year-on-Year Movements

- **Down:** Employer helps me look after my health (**-13%**); Paid correctly (**-4 %**) (still strong at 91%)
- **Up:** Know how to ask for holidays (**+11 %**); Complaint knowledge (**+5%**); Facilities (**+4%**)

### Question Summary 2025 Scores (with prior years)

- Know my employer: **99%** (100%, 87%)
- Taught work safety: **98%** (98%, 86%)
- Respected at work: **97%** (97%, 83%)
- Working legally: **96%** (97%, 88%)
- Feel safe at work: **98%** (97%, 85%)
- Feel safe at my accommodation: **96%** (97%, 84%)
- Employer helps my health: **84%** (97%, 84%)
- Signed contract before start: **97%** (96%, 84%)
- Team leader to advocate if I need: **96%** (96%, 86%)
- Deductions explained & agreed: **96%** (96%, —)
- Timesheets are accurate: **95%** (96%, 83%)
- Job matches my expectations: **97%** (96%, 83%)
- I am paid correctly: **91%** (95%, 82%)
- Access to my personal documents: **95%** (94%, 85%)
- Safe/private toilet and hand washing facilities: **97%** (93%, 83%)
- Enough money after deductions and tax: **90%** (89%, 82%)
- Take rest breaks: **89%** (87%, 77%)
- I know how to raise a complaint: **87%** (82%, 77%)
- I know how to ask for holidays: **88%** (77%, 84%)
- I can say “no” to extra hours: **72%** (72%, 67%)