

Construction and Infrastructure sector:

Worker support practice toolkit



Introduction

Looking after your team pays off

Smart, targeted support, like helping workers with transport, personal hurdles, or a specific goal keeps people in the job longer and performing better.

You don't need to solve everything, but putting a bit of structure around how you support your team can:

- ▶ boost loyalty and reduce churn
- ▶ build a stronger, more reliable crew, and
- ▶ help good workers become great ones.

Whether someone's new to the trade or been around a while, **a bit of backing goes a long way.** That's good for them, and good for your business.



Key content

WHAT CAN YOU DO RIGHT NOW?

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Who this toolkit is for and how can it be used

As a business owner, site manager, or team leader – looking after your people is part of your job.

These guidelines are here to help you:

- ▶ spot the key moments in a worker's career where support makes the biggest difference, so you're ready to step in, not scrambling to react
- ▶ check where you're already doing well, and where there may be gaps in your current approach, and
- ▶ get practical, proven ideas you can start thinking about or trying out straight away.

These ideas aren't one-size-fits-all. You'll need to consider what works for your team, your region, and your business. But no matter your size or setup, the goal is the same: creating a supportive environment to attract, retain, and grow good people.

The bottom line

You don't need a flash HR team or a new policy manual to look after your people. The basics go a long way.

Keep it simple: *A check-in. A heads-up. A quiet word if someone's off their game. You already know how to do this, it's just good leadership.*

Keep it human: *Life happens. People get tired, stressed, or stuck. A bit of understanding builds trust, loyalty, and a better team culture.*

Keep it up: *Don't wait for things to break. A bit of regular support and written processes can help keep your crew steady, safe, and sticking around.*

What next?

This worker support practice toolkit is free to use, **extract or adapt the content you need (pages 7-22 have been designed with this in mind)**. Place your logo on it and have a chat with your team.

Ask what's working and what's not. Then pick one or two new things to try – and give them a crack.

What do we mean by “worker support”

In this toolkit, we’re keeping it simple and refer to pastoral care and needs-based support as **worker support**.

There’s no single agreed definition across the sector – yet . But we can take guidance from New Zealand Employment Standards, Apprentice Codes, and strong on-the-ground industry practices to get a working understanding of what good worker support looks like, and what it doesn’t.

The list below gives you a few examples to get started. Have a conversation with your team about what support should look like in your business, and for your people. You might even want to give it a different name, one that makes sense for your people.

Systems that prioritise wellbeing

You need more than good intentions – you need systems.

- ▶ Worker wellbeing is part of business planning.
- ▶ Clear processes exist to identify and respond to wellbeing and support needs.
- ▶ Workers know where to go and who to talk to when they need help – including a “go to” person responsible for wellbeing within your business.

Safe environments

Responsibility is taken for making sites or workplaces physically, culturally, and emotionally safe so people feel like they belong and can be themselves.

This includes respecting different cultures, needs, and work styles then making sure your team does too.

Inclusion isn’t about special treatment; it’s about giving everyone a fair shot to do their best work and grow their careers.

Worker participation

Workers are the experts on what’s working and what’s not.

- ▶ Workers are involved in decisions that affect their day-to-day, especially around safety and culture.
- ▶ Safe, regular and easy-to-use ways exist for people to raise concerns and share feedback. Follow up happens because the team’s voice matters.

Worker support

Support needs to reach beyond job performance. It should consider what people need to succeed at work and in life.

- ▶ Looking out for the physical and mental health of your people is a priority.
- ▶ You are aware of your people’s goals and challenges and know when and how to point them in a good direction.
- ▶ Approaches to offering support are adapted as people’s needs change, from apprentice to senior worker, and through life’s ups and downs.

What it is not

We know “pastoral care” or “worker support” might sound like big ideas or extra paperwork. But this is really just about creating the kind of work environment where people want to stick around, grow their skills, and do their best.



Here's what it *doesn't* mean:

It's not just ticking the box

Minimum wage, PPE, and ticking health & safety forms, that's the legal floor, not the ceiling. Real support is about trust, respect, and building a team culture where people feel safe, valued, and included, regardless of their background.

It's not an optional extra

Supporting your team well leads to better retention, less downtime, and a stronger business. You already invest in tools and materials – this is investing in the people using them.

It's not just about learning

Good support goes beyond making sure someone can pass their course or get through their apprenticeship – it's about helping them stay on track in life and work, especially when the pressure is on.

It's not only for when things go wrong

Good support is proactive. That might mean a quick check-in, spotting when someone's not quite right, or removing small barriers before they become big problems.

It's not about doing everything yourself

Smart operators know where their limits are, and where to connect their people to outside help. That's not soft, it's just good leadership.

Support doesn't mean fixing everything it means creating an environment where people can ask for help and get pointed in the right direction.

It's not one-size-fits-all

What works for one person might not work for another, whether that's someone just starting out, or a parent juggling work and family. You don't need 100 different ways of providing care and support, but knowing your people and adapting to the situation helps.

And it's definitely not a distraction from real issues

Worker support isn't about covering up bad practices, it's about doing right by your people. This isn't a PR fix or a way to “look good” while overlooking real problems like underpaying workers, dodgy contracts, or worker exploitation. Those things hurt workers – and your business reputation.

Why worker support makes business sense

Running a construction and infrastructure business today is harder than ever and workforce issues are at the heart of it. Many of the challenges you're dealing with on the ground are part of a much bigger problem.

Where we are today...

You can't find the people you need

Right now, it is hard to get the right skilled people for work. That means tougher competition for good staff, longer lead times, and growing pressure on your current team.

You're losing experienced workers faster than you can replace them

Experienced tradespeople are leaving the industry and there aren't enough young people staying to fill the gap.

Newer workers aren't sticking around

Apprentices and early-career workers are leaving the sector in droves, often within the first few years, taking your time, money, and effort with them.

Our industry isn't working for everyone

A lack of diversity means we're missing out on good people and fresh ideas, something no small business can afford.

Productivity is stuck, even when everyone's working flat out

Long hours, old systems, and constant rework are burning people out. Even with full books, many businesses are struggling to get ahead, and the skills shortage is only making it worse.

Where we could be tomorrow...

Better workers, less stress

- ▶ When you help people deal with life's challenges – whether it's mental health, home life, or learning the ropes – they show up, stick around, and get the job done.

Stronger teams

- ▶ A workplace where people feel backed is one where they trust each other, work better together, and are more likely to go the extra mile.

More ways to solve problems

- ▶ Supporting a mix of people from different backgrounds brings in new ideas and better ways of doing things, which can give you an edge on the competition.

Less churn, more results

- ▶ Supporting workers properly increases loyalty, reduces turnover, boosts productivity, and sets you up for long-term success.

Who are we doing it for?

The way we work is changing, and our sector needs to keep up.

The old ways of doing things doesn't cut it for today's workforce, especially for those just starting out in construction and infrastructure. What worked 20 years ago might not be what keeps workers engaged, safe, and sticking around today.

If we want to attract, retain, and grow good people, we need to evolve what support looks like on site from day one through to long-term careers.

This means thinking differently about the people in our workforce, what drives them, where they are headed, and what might be holding them back.

Potential characteristics, challenges, and needs of workers

I am/ I have:

- ▶ young, undertaking a career change or returning to work
- ▶ women, men and/or LGBTQ+
- ▶ neurodiverse characteristics
- ▶ a permanent disability, injury or chronic health condition
- ▶ new to New Zealand
- ▶ from a minority ethnic group with its own cultural norms, values and beliefs

My challenges might look like:

- ▶ low literacy and numeracy
- ▶ no or low comprehension of the English language
- ▶ undiagnosed conditions that affect learning or interpersonal development
- ▶ finance or the cost of living
- ▶ limited access to transport
- ▶ lack of time or limited time management skills
- ▶ ongoing competing priorities for example family/community obligations, study, or sporting commitments
- ▶ limited access to technology or overuse of
- ▶ limited career choices and guidance due to where I live
- ▶ lots of career options with no clear guidance or path forward
- ▶ low social or work experience

I may value:

- ▶ equity, equality and social impact
- ▶ different ways of connecting and learning
- ▶ building transferrable skills alongside technical skills
- ▶ applying myself to meaningful work
- ▶ visible leadership and transparency
- ▶ seeing others like me in leadership or training positions
- ▶ recognition and celebrating success
- ▶ environmental efforts

I may need:

- ▶ an inclusive and safe culture I can see and be myself in
- ▶ work/life balance, flexibility, hybrid or adaptable work arrangements
- ▶ language, literacy or numeracy support
- ▶ fair remuneration and financial guidance and assistance
- ▶ ongoing training with a view of what progression looks like
- ▶ collaboration and opportunities to connect with peers
- ▶ ongoing guidance and feedback
- ▶ regular health and wellbeing support

What can you do right now?

Your company's approach to supporting your people will look different from others and that's okay. It will depend on things like:

- ▶ how well you understand what worker support means
- ▶ where you're based
- ▶ the makeup of your team (age, gender, culture, ability, experience), and
- ▶ the time, tools, and resources you have on hand.

What's in the next few pages to help:

- 1. Practice focus areas:** A one-page overview of key focus areas – a simple way to see where change can happen.
- 2. Practice ideas:** examples of actions you can take now.

1. Practice focus areas

Six focus areas are introduced that describe points in a worker's typical experience with an employer where worker supports will have the most impact.

- + **Onboarding and orientation**
- + **Seeing the person**
- + **Supporting needs and goals**
- + **Growing your support network**
- + **Building team culture**
- + **Role and career moves**

Each of the focus areas above have a description of what good looks like alongside some high level practice examples. The framework can be used as a starting point to prompt thinking about where your company has strong practice and where the gaps might be. *See page 22 for a more comprehensive list.*

2. Practice ideas

Each of the focus areas have a dedicated page to describe practical ideas in more detail.

These ideas sit in buckets that align with the scale of effort to do them, for example, from things you might consider thinking about or raising with the team through to bigger actions that need more time.

Some of the practice initiatives feature guidance or templates you can use for thought starters.

Worker support: focus areas

Focus Area	Onboarding and orientation	Seeing the person	Supporting needs and goals	Growing your support network	Building team culture	Role and career moves
People get off to a good start, understand their role and the company's expectations.	People understand the company's expectations and have a clear understanding of their role and the company's culture.	People understand the company's expectations and have a clear understanding of their role and the company's culture.	People understand the company's expectations and have a clear understanding of their role and the company's culture.	People understand the company's expectations and have a clear understanding of their role and the company's culture.	People understand the company's expectations and have a clear understanding of their role and the company's culture.	People understand the company's expectations and have a clear understanding of their role and the company's culture.
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THINK

- One size does not fit all. Consider the changing nature of the workforce and how might you adjust your approach to supporting your people? (e.g. gender, age, communication styles and experience beyond the job?)
- How might you let your team see the person behind the leader including what's important to you, what drives you and the way you have built the business?

TALK

- Ask questions to get to know your people – and find out what will set them up for success. This could include:
 - who is in their personal support network and where they spend their time outside of work;
 - what their communication and learning styles are;
 - whether they need any help in equipment that would support them to do the job well.
- Seek to understand and honour your people's orientation and identity to a social, gender, cultural or other. Create space to recognise identity, shared and cultural traditions into part of working life.

DO

- Consider what your workers share with you about themselves and where use those insights to:
 - identify, offer and action (with agreement), specific supports or connect them to people who can help;
 - strengthen connections between workers in order networks with shared interests/networks;
 - create intentional and varied ways for your team to get to know each other – whether through informal team profiles or social gatherings – regular connection time that everyone can participate in is more valuable than formal;
 - strengthen trust and widen your business community by connecting with external personal support networks (schools/family) and all. Create inclusive space, thoughtful listening, and meaningful activities. Be curious and open to answering questions.

Seeing the person
Worker support practice toolkit

Seeing the person speaks to how workers are received both by you and their colleagues and can have a flow on impact to how they engage as part of your team and represent your business.

THINK

Things to reflect on

TALK

Things to ask or raise with your team

DO

Things you can action or invest in

The following pages (7-22) have been designed for you to place your logo on or extract and adapt content as you need it.

Construction and Infrastructure sector:

Worker support practice toolkit



[Insert your
company
name/logo]

[Insert Date]

Worker support focus areas

Focus area	Onboarding and orientation	Seeing the person	Supporting needs and goals	Growing your support network	Building team culture	Role and career moves
Signs of success	People get off to the right start by feeling welcome, valued, and comfortable with next steps	People connect and find purpose at work because they feel seen, heard, and safe	People thrive in the workplace and feel confident to overcome challenges because getting help is easy, timely, and right for them	People act on early signs of need as they have awareness, are connected to community and know what services exist to help	A culture where people proactively turn up, pipe up and recognise the ups and downs strengthens solidarity	Change is viewed as an opportunity and relationships are positive, even when people pivot or exit the industry
Key employer benefits	✓ People feel better at work ✓ People show up more often ✓ More work gets done	✓ People feel better at work ✓ People show up more often ✓ Workers stick around longer ✓ More work gets done ✓ People are connected, the culture is strong & healthy	✓ People feel better at work ✓ People show up more often ✓ Workers stick around longer ✓ More work gets done ✓ New ways of doing things are shared ✓ Customers experience great service ✓ Good people want to work with & for you	✓ New ways of doing things are shared ✓ People are connected, the culture is strong & healthy ✓ Good people want to work with & for you	✓ People feel better at work ✓ People show up more often ✓ Workers stick around longer ✓ More work gets done ✓ New ways of doing things are shared ✓ People are connected, the culture is strong & healthy ✓ Customers experience great service ✓ Good people want to work with & for you	✓ People show up more often ✓ Workers stick around longer ✓ People are connected, the culture is strong & healthy ✓ Good people want to work with & for you
Practice opportunity examples	▶ Welcome warmly and create space for connection and whakawhanaungatanga. ▶ Ensure onboarding information and activities cover everything new workers need to know including what comes next. ▶ Support initial relationship building and learning by pairing experienced staff with new workers or buddy/mentoring arrangements.	▶ Get to know your people – and what will set them up to be successful. ▶ Seek to understand and honour your worker's orientation, culture and identity. ▶ Create a variety of intentional ways for your team to get to know each other.	▶ Work together to overcome set-backs and achieve goals, ensuring you revisit them regularly. ▶ Identify and create regular ways for your team to collaborate and learn together. ▶ Set up ways for your people to safely feed back or voice needs and concerns.	▶ Lean into your local support system to learn how their knowledge and skills can complement what you do for your team. ▶ Partner and coordinate with your training advisor to navigate learner needs. ▶ Make visible and regularly raise awareness of company resources, supports and partnerships that are available to your people.	▶ Look for ways to grow company culture – including values or behaviors that reflect your people, their experience and viewpoint. ▶ Invite feedback and seek ideas from your team. ▶ Reward positive contributions to team culture and recognise leadership skills.	▶ Support your workers to navigate specific career points in time such as the move into and out of apprenticeships. ▶ Make it easy for staff to see how they can grow within your company. ▶ Acknowledge valuable input departing team members have made and make sure to have a chat to them about the why and what next.

THINK

- ▶ How do you as a leader invest in new starter relationships and ensure they get a warm welcome?
- ▶ How do you ensure your people understand the importance of their role and skills within your company?
- ▶ Alongside technical skills what workforce ready or transferrable skills do you consider key to the success of your people and business, for example, time management or problem solving.
 - + How could your induction process quickly show where new starters have gaps and help to close them?
- ▶ Exposure and learning can go both ways. Think about the value and importance of a buddy/mentoring arrangement for workers to connect, experience positive role modelling and come up to speed quickly. Identify who would be best placed to be involved.
- ▶ Returning from leave whether from injury, parental leave or a mental health break are critical moments, that alongside being new to work, need to be treated with care. Think about how you remain connected to your worker during their time away and what a return to work plan could look like.

TALK

- ▶ Check in on new starters before their first day, even if it's a quick phone call to let them know where to be and what they can expect to be doing in their first few days with you.
- ▶ Ask your team what key information, resources and equipment they found helpful when they first started to keep onboarding practice up-to-date.
- ▶ Ask your team how you can create space for whakawhanaungatanga and connection on day one for new starters and during the onboarding process.
- ▶ Get to know any outside of work commitments your new starters have so you understand and can plan for flexibility, for example daycare pick ups or netball coaching. Be sure to communicate whether the flexibility you're offering is a one off or permanent arrangement.
- ▶ Talk to your workers and wider network about buddy and mentoring arrangements. Gather ideas about expectations, goals and time commitments to see whether it might be a good fit for your business.

DO

- ▶ Develop a checklist to make sure new starters have everything they need on day one. This might look like key information about facilities, equipment or where/who to seek further guidance from.
- ▶ Capture and share with your new starter a high level week by week plan to ensure they know what comes next.
- ▶ Integrate key workforce ready or transferrable skills that are important to your business into the induction learning process, for example time management skills.
- ▶ Establish a buddy/mentoring process or support relationship building and initial learning through small team structures, pairing experienced staff with new workers.
- ▶ Write it all down – capture and organise key information about your people, agreements and processes and follow up.

People get off to the right start by feeling welcome, valued, and comfortable with next steps

THINK

- ▶ One size does not fit all. Given the changing nature of the workforce how could you adjust your approach to connecting with people – thinking about identity, gender, age, communication styles and aspirations beyond the job?
- ▶ How could you let your team see the person behind the leader including what's important to you, what drives you and the way you have built the business?

TALK

- ▶ Ask questions to get to know your people – and find out what will set them up for success. This could include:
 - + who is in their personal support network and where they spend their time outside of work or,
 - + what their communication and learning styles are, or
 - + whether they need any help or equipment that would support them to do the job well.
- ▶ Seek to understand and honour your peoples' orientation and identity, be it social, gender, cultural or other. Create space to integrate karakia, shared kai, and cultural traditions into part of everyday work life.

DO

- ▶ Consider what your workers share with you about themselves and where to use those insights to:
 - + identify, offer and action (with agreement), specific supports or connect them to people who can help, and
 - + strengthen connections between workers or wider networks with shared interests/networks.
- ▶ Create intentional and varied ways for your team to get to know each other – whether through internal team profiles or social gatherings. Regular connection time that everyone can participate in is more valuable than formality.
- ▶ Strengthen trust and widen your business community by connecting with workers' personal support networks (whānau/family and iwi). Choose inclusive spaces, thoughtful timing, and meaningful activities. Be curious and open to answering questions.



Please see a companion guide "Apprenticeship toolkit" for effective ways to recruit, connect, and work specifically with apprentices.

People connect and find purpose at work because they feel seen, heard, and safe

Seeing the person

Worker support practice toolkit

Seeing the person speaks to how workers are received both by you and their colleagues and can have a flow on impact to how they engage as part of your team and represent your business.

How you got here: What led you to this role and what did the journey look like to get here?

My uncle – had me helping with plastering for his house renos. Then did a course at Polytech where you got to try a few different trades. Still liked this one the best though!

Interests: how do you like to spend your time outside of work?

Hang out with my mates and I'm learning how to weld at the moment

What does relaxing look like for you?

Hanging out with my mates.
River swims and watching a movie with my girlfriend

Commitments: what regular priorities or obligations do you have outside of work that would be useful for me to know?

Rugby practice

Role goals/aspirations: What does success look like for you over the next 6 months?

I want to learn more about interior vs exterior plastering so I can decide what I'm best at.
I want to do a good job so the team trust me to do the bigger jobs with them.

NAME

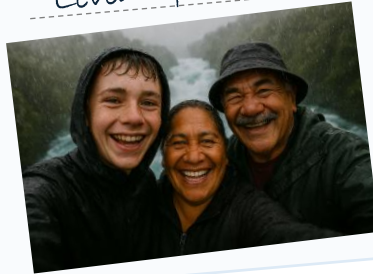
Jacob Torrens

NICKNAME

Jake

ROLE

Level 1- plasterer



Your "go to" people: Who are the people you value and go to for support?

My mum, uncle Tom and aunt Rahera.
My girlfriend Tia.
My rugby mates (most of them I know through school)

Challenges: what barriers or challenges do you have that might present in the workplace that you're comfortable to share (current or pending).

None that I can think of. I do live a far from work so if I miss the bus it isn't another one for an hour.

Needs: what support, equipment resources do you need to be able to work well and thrive?

Can't think of anything

What does stress look like on you and what do you find helps?

I can be a bit quiet I guess

Communication and learning: you like to engage with people you learn?

I like to see videos
I'm trying to do

Remember if you spot something that needs addressing, ask yourself:

- + What can I do?
- + What guidance do I need?
- + Who can I connect with who can help?

DO

PRACTICE RESOURCE: learning about your people question sheet

TIMING: 2-3 hours

WHO: Employer or lead and new starter

PROCESS:

1. Print off the template and change content where it needs to be more local and immediate to your region, company and people.
2. Take the time to discuss with a new starter why this activity is important, what the questions mean and what you'll do with the information. Let them ask questions and tell you how they'd like to complete it. *For example, people may want to talk about it while others might like to write or draw their responses.*
3. Provide a timeframe for them to complete it by and book in the next meeting to follow up.
4. Once you receive the new starter's response take the time to review its content and make note of things you'd like to capture, know more about or offer to help with.

HOW TO USE IT:

Based on the points you've noted, discuss with your new starter what care or extra supports are available to help them. *For example during the winter they have rugby practice on Thursday nights on the other side of town – you might suggest a flexible working arrangement for the season.*

How you got here: What led you to this role and what did the journey look like to get here?

Role goals/aspirations: What does success look like for you over the next 6 months?

Challenges: what barriers or challenges do you have that might present in the workplace that you're comfortable to share (*current or pending*).

NAME

NICKNAME

ROLE

Interests: how do you like to spend your time outside of work?

What does relaxing look like for you?



CHOOSE A PHOTO THAT
SHOWS YOU IN A MOMENT
YOU'RE PROUD OF OR WITH
PEOPLE YOU LOVE OR ADMIRE

Needs: what support, equipment or resources do you need to be able to work well and thrive?

What does stress look like on you and what do you find helps?

Commitments: what regular priorities or obligations do you have outside of work that would be useful for me to know?

Your "go to" people: Who are the people you value and go to for support?

Communication and learning: how you like to engage with people and learn?

THINK

- ▶ What channels do you have for people to easily and safely feed back or voice needs and concerns? How can you remind people what they are and how/when they can be accessed?
- ▶ Are there leadership or dedicated support roles in your company where responsibilities and commitment to the team could be clearer? For example, are you the “go to” person for wellbeing support and are you available outside working hours?
- ▶ When **challenges** are raised ask yourself, what can I do to help? As a leader, where do I need additional or specialist support? Who can I ask for help?
- ▶ Equally when **opportunities** are raised ask yourself, what can I do to support this person? Do I need additional or specialist guidance? Who can I connect with to help?

If you see an opportunity to connect your worker to external support, for example a budgeting advisor service, ensure you raise it with them and get agreement on it as a step they want to take.

TALK

- ▶ Make checking in with your people to see how they're doing a regular practice regardless of whether there's something specific to address. Being present and taking an interest in people builds trust and comfort in seeking your guidance should they need it in the future.
- ▶ Aim to have one-on-one conversations about goals, set-backs or challenges in surroundings that are familiar to your people to level the power balance. For example, talking about a challenging job is likely to be easier if a worker is in an environment they know or feel comfortable in.
- ▶ Work together to come up with plans to overcome set-backs or achieve goals. Ensure you discuss with your people the options and agree what comes next and when.

DO

- ▶ Identify and create space for collaboration and intentional learning opportunities, ensuring your people understand the value purpose and commitment you're asking of them.
- ▶ Take time to check progress and revisit goals that have been set by your team. Follow-through is what counts to help people succeed and maintain trust.
- ▶ Create ceremony and recognise achievement (big and small) acknowledging people start from different places.
- ▶ Turn good practice into business knowledge to make sure momentum isn't lost. For example, by capturing collaboration techniques that worked or recording goal planning processes or checklists.

People thrive in the workplace and feel confident to overcome challenges because getting help is easy, timely, and right for them

THINK

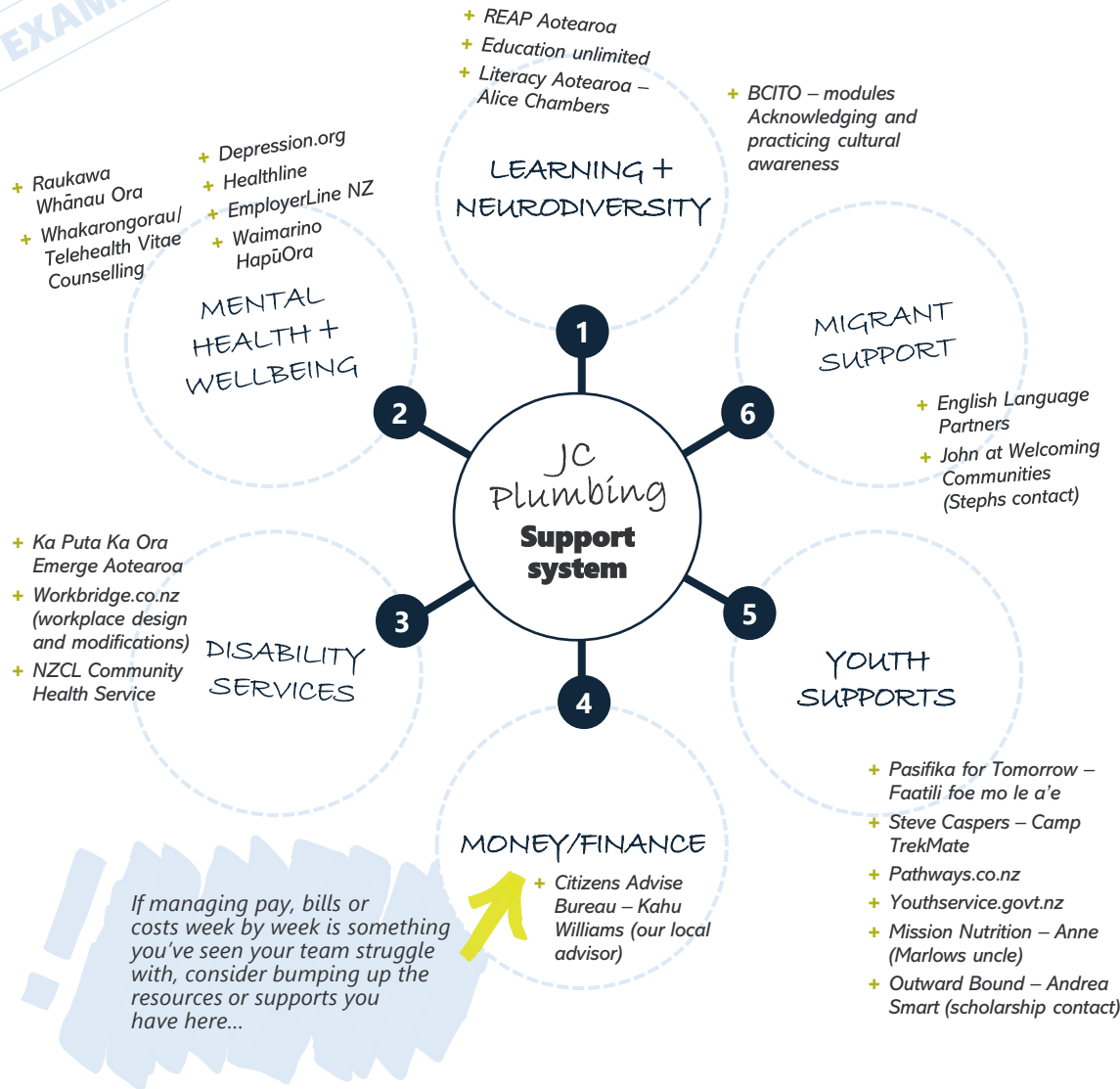
- ▶ What are the most common concerns and needs your people have and is there a pattern? How could you proactively address these things before they happen or when they happen, address them quickly?
- ▶ Consider who sits in your support system. Research and reach out to people, community or service providers to learn how their knowledge and approach can complement what you do for your team.

TALK

- ▶ Connect with your team and discuss what care and support means and looks like for your people, in your region and line of work.
- ▶ Keep company and external resources and delivery partnerships visible – referring to them often so people know what options there are for support and how to access them.
- ▶ Provide information, promote discussion and empower your staff – so that they can recognise the signs that someone might need assistance and know what to do.
- ▶ Make peer networks visible and encourage participation.

DO

- ▶ Connect and coordinate with training advisors – to help you navigate learner needs alongside supporting learning plans and training.
- ▶ Explore relationships with local iwi, church groups or community networks, especially where workers have established connections.



PRACTICE RESOURCE: Your support system

TIMING: 1hr and ongoing

WHO: Employer, HR, Leadership team and don't forget to ask your employees

PROCESS:

1. Write down a list of all the people, services or resources in your wider network that you'd seek help from or use for supporting your people. This could be an industry mate, the *Are You Ok?* online resources or a service like Healthline. There's no right or wrong answer.
2. Print off the template on the next page (or draw your own) and write in the spaces provided categories that make sense to you that the list could be split into, *for example*,
 - + **support subject matter:** mental health, literacy, disability support
 - + **channels:** print/digital resources, key people, professional or Government services

Read and transfer the people, services and resources you've come up with into the categories they align most to.

HOW TO USE IT:

Looking at your map can you see:

- + any gaps that you may need to research, and fill based on what your people come to you for?
- + are there people you've lost touch with or services you don't know how to access?

Make a note of what you need more of and make it a regular habit to backfill this map. When a worker needs assistance that's outside your area of expertise you can call on it quickly to see what your next steps will be. If it evolves into a support directory for your team, even better!

1

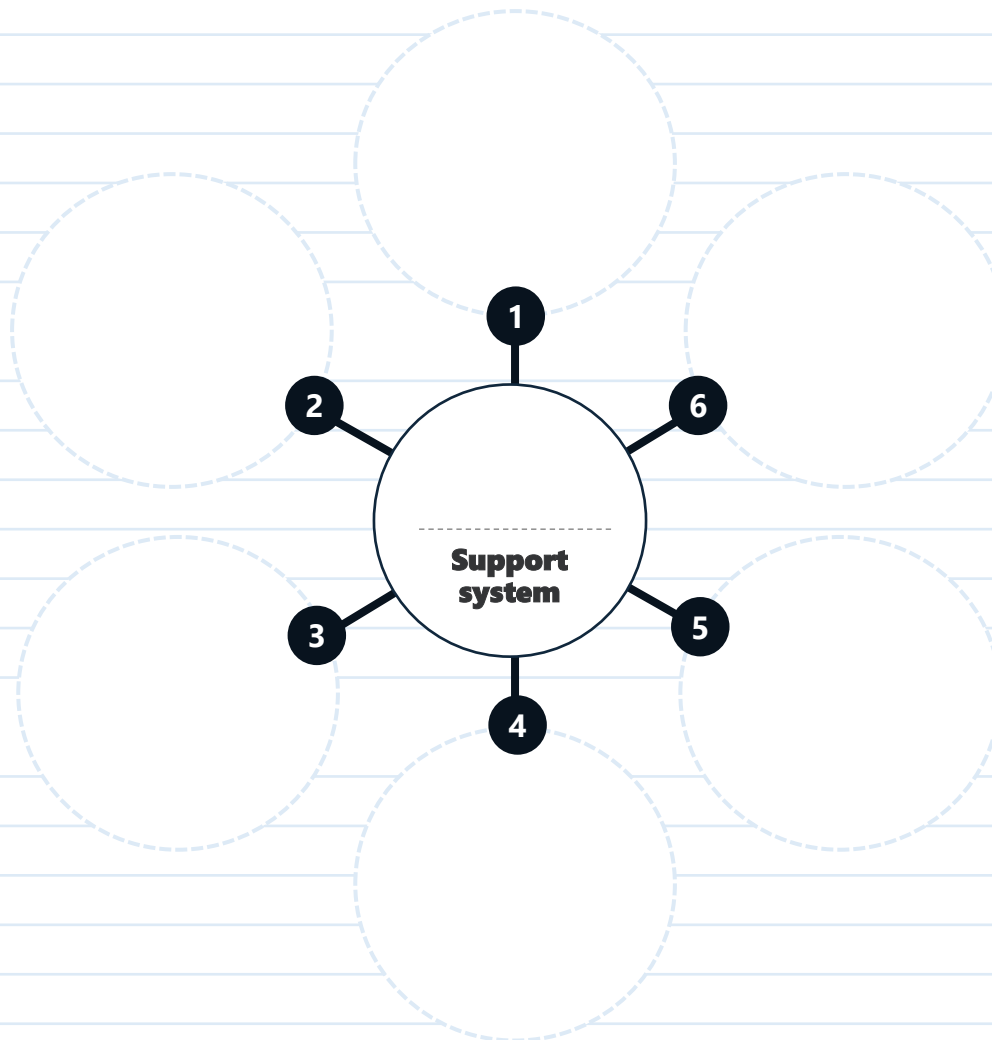
6

2

5

3

4



THINK

- ▶ What ways are you showing the values and behaviour you want to see in others at work? Are there any behaviours you can leave behind and some you'd like to show more of?
- ▶ Is your company culture reflective of the diversity and perspective your people bring to the table? What might a culture 2.0 look like if you could stop some things, start some things and keep the good practice?
- ▶ Reflecting on how and who you're hiring, are you bringing in the right mix of diversity and skills to grow your team and support your business?

TALK

- ▶ Providing opportunity for the team to contribute to business or culture change can create a sense of ownership, accountability and achievement. Let your people know what company processes are fixed and where ideas or feedback are welcome.
- ▶ Invite workers to share aspects of their culture that are important to them to create shared understanding including engaging with Te Ao Māori and Pacific concepts of wellbeing.
- ▶ Proactively talk with your people about communication styles and preferences to understand:
 - + how to play to their strengths, and
 - + how you might agree to resolve disagreements when they arise.
- ▶ Serious safety incidents, restructures, or community events can have a big impact on morale. Show up for affected workers quickly – ensuring they have the time, people and supports they need to help process the situation. You don't have to have all the answers, but you do need to create the space for your people to ask questions.

DO

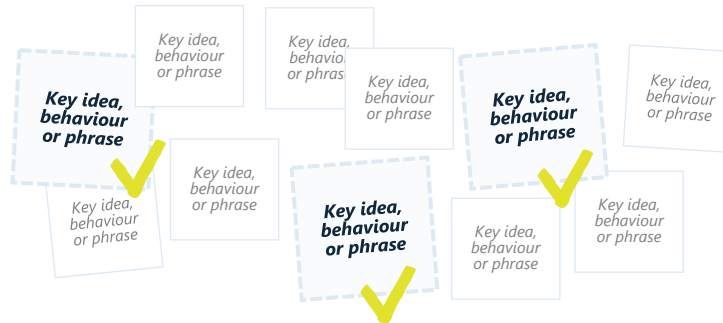
- ▶ Invest in the team culture with intentional opportunities for team building and social events where everybody is welcome and can participate.
- ▶ Reward positive contributions to team culture and make a point of recognising when staff model leadership.

Share and discuss behaviour based stories.

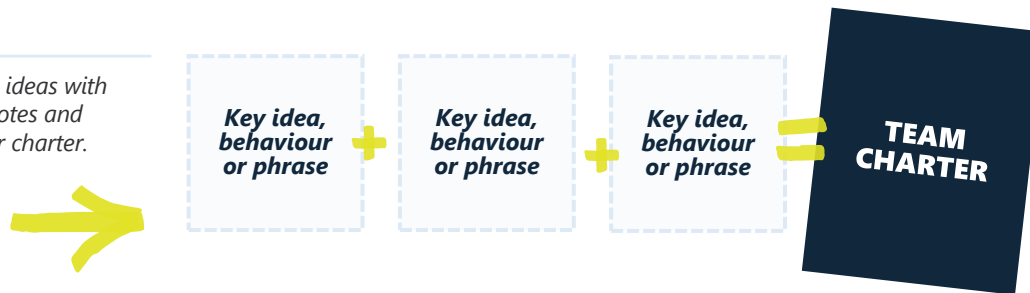
Repeat for each team member and write down the things that were discussed.



Looking at all the ideas the teams come up with, ask people to vote for the ideas that feel right for them and the team culture.



Gather the ideas with the most votes and create your charter.



QUICK TIP: If your people aren't comfortable talking about scenarios that were challenging simply ask them to recall a positive experience and name those behaviors instead.

PRACTICE RESOURCE: Team commitment/ charter guide

TIMING: **Team work** – 2 hours (based on team of 10)
Refining – 3 hours (based on someone taking the lead to craft the final)

WHO: Leader and team

PROCESS:

1. Give a heads up that you want your team to create a charter together and what the process is going to be.
2. Gather your team in a familiar environment, ensuring everyone can participate.
3. Discuss the purpose and why a charter is valuable and how it will be used. Create a safe space for discussion.
4. Ask people to think about and share with the group a time when they experienced or witnessed a difficult scenario at work and get them to name the behaviours they saw that made it worse.
5. Invite the team to discuss each scenario that's raised and come up with what a better approach may have been.
6. Capture these key positive ideas, behaviours and phrases on a whiteboard for everyone to see.
7. Ask the team to vote on the top 8-10 concepts they want each other to show in your workplace.
8. Discuss how you might like to see the charter used and what it might look like.
9. A lead then takes the ideas away to turn the teams thinking into a charter that reflects what they value.

HOW TO USE IT:

- + Use it to onboard new team members.
- + Use it to guide decisions and resolve disputes.
- + Include it in performance discussions.

THINK

- ▶ Can you reflect on a time when you would have appreciated guidance when faced with an important situation or choice you thought you had to keep to yourself?
 - + How could you make workers feel safe and supported to openly discuss needs and future plans including moves to other companies or trades?
 - + Could you connect them with people in your network who might be able to provide further guidance or opportunity that is more aligned with their goals and aspirations?
- ▶ Have you observed any pre or post resignation signals and trends, or perhaps needs that aren't currently being met?
 - + Are there any issues you might be able to proactively address before you see it again in the future?

TALK

- ▶ Support workers to navigate the move into and out of apprenticeships, helping them understand expectations of the role, what comes next, and who can provide guidance along the way.
- ▶ Make it easy for all workers to see how they can grow within the company. Share your company's structure, what roles exist and why, and what steps they could take to get them.
- ▶ Create equal opportunity for progression by being transparent about what roles are available and when, as well as the skills and experience needed to do the job well.

DO

- ▶ Invest time in having an exit conversation with departing team members to understand why they're leaving and what their next steps are. There are opportunities for learning and growth for both parties if a safe space is created to capture feedback. Where appropriate, share learnings with your leadership team to discuss where/if improvements need to be made.
- ▶ Acknowledge the contributions of departing team members, take the time to say goodbye and create a comfortable space for the team to do so too.
- ▶ Write down the offboarding process so it can be easily followed next time.

QUICK TIP: Not all departures are appropriate to explain or mark with occasion. Ensure you talk to the person who is leaving to ask how they would like to have their departure acknowledged.

Role and career moves

Worker support practice toolkit

Growth and change is an important and inevitable part of a career path. As an employer, seeing and supporting your people's potential whether that's within your own company or being the bridge to their next step shows commitment to your relationship and what's in their best interests.

Change is viewed as an opportunity and relationships are positive, even when people pivot or exit the industry

- + What parts of the job did you enjoy most and why?
- + What are you most proud of achieving here?
- + Were there any specific challenges or obstacles you faced during your time here?
- + Were there any tools, systems, or processes that helped you or got in your way?
- + Did you feel your skills were being used well?
- + How well did the training and learning opportunities meet your needs and expectations?
- + How well did you feel supported by your team and leaders?
- + What else could we have done to keep you feeling more supported?
- + How would you describe the culture on site or in the office?
- + What advice would you give to new people joining our team?
- + Is there anything you'd like to raise that we haven't covered that is important to share?

PRACTICE RESOURCE: Exit interview questions

HOW TO USE IT:

Here are some key questions you can choose to ask workers who are leaving that might give you insight into current company practice that you can address, strengthen or consider starting.

The questions you ask should be right for your people and context and appropriate for the person and reason they're leaving.

Questions can be raised in conversation or through a survey.

The most important thing to do is create a safe space for sharing, listen carefully and capture the responses to support any change that needs to be made.



See the next page for this template

Role and career moves

Is this relevant to your team and the size of your business?

Shed some light on the types of roles and skills they might want to have set in their sights for the future.

Keep it up!

3	Our people are supported to navigate career changes
2	Our people know how they can grow within the company
4	We have exit conversations with departing team members
5	We acknowledge contributions of departing team members and say goodbye
4	The offboarding process is written down

DO

PRACTICE RESOURCE: foundational worker supports assessment

TIMING: 2 hours+

WHO: Employer and/or Leadership team

PROCESS:

Read through the list and in the column next to each point give yourself a rating on a scale from 1-5 to indicate whether you think your company demonstrates:

Limited practice.....	1
Some practice	2
Some good practice.....	3
Good practice.....	4
Great practice	5

HOW TO USE IT:

Once you've finished reflect on the areas where you've rated 1-3.

This is not a formal evaluation of how advanced you are in providing good care and support to your people. What it is, is an opportunity to reflect and see where the gaps are so that when you're ready you know where to focus new thinking or practice.

If nothing else, we encourage you to...



Onboarding and Orientation

	Pre day one check in's with new starters are done to ensure they know what to expect in their first few days with you
	Relationships with new starters are proactively built
	Space is created for welcoming, connection and whakawhanaungatanga
	Induction information and activities cover everything new workers need including what comes next
	Initial relationship building and learning is supported through pairing new starters with experienced staff or buddy/mentoring
	Commitments new starters have outside of work are known about and planned for
	Processes and information about our people are written down
	Return to work plans are in place for workers who have been on extended leave

Seeing the person

	I/we know our people and understand what helps each of them to succeed
	I/we continuously seek to understand and respect our people's orientation, culture and identity
	Intentional and varied opportunities are available for the team to get to know each other
	My team's support network (whānau/family and iwi) are part of our wider business community
	My team knows me as a leader – my motivations and vision.

Supporting needs and goals

	Check-ins with team members are done regularly
	My team's goals, set-backs or challenges are known
	Plans to overcome set-backs and achieve goals are in place and created together
	Plans to overcome set-backs and achieve goals are revisited regularly
	Inclusive collaboration and learning opportunities happen often
	Achievement is recognised
	The team have ways to feed back or safely voice needs and concerns
	The responsibilities, and availability of people whose role it is to provide support to the team is clear
	I/we know what information and supports are needed and who is best placed to provide it when a challenge or opportunity is raised
	Good practice is turned into business knowledge

Growing your support network

	I/we know and are engaged with our local support system (people, service providers, resources)
	I/we partner and coordinate with training advisors to navigate learner needs
	I/we have relationships with local iwi, church groups or community networks, especially where workers have established connections
	Company resources, supports and partnerships that are available to the team are known and consistently visible
	My team recognise the signs of someone who might need additional assistance and know what the next steps are
	Peer networks are known by the team and participation is encouraged

Building team culture

	Our company culture changes and grows to reflect the perspectives and diversity of the team
	I/we consistently demonstrate the values and behaviours we want to see in our team
	Our people connect through regular team building opportunities and social events
	Positive contributions to team culture and leadership skills are recognised
	Feedback and ideas from the team is/are welcome and sought
	Hiring processes bring in the right mix of diversity alongside technical skills
	When serious events occur, the team is shown and given the care and support they need to help process the situation

Role and career moves

	Our people are supported to navigate career changes
	Our people know how they can grow within the company
	We have exit conversations with departing team members
	We acknowledge contributions of departing team members and say goodbye
	The offboarding process is written down

About this toolkit

This toolkit was developed by Waihangara Ara Rau and ConCOVE Tūhara to help employers in the New Zealand construction and infrastructure sector build stronger, more resilient teams through practical support.

It's based on what people in the industry told us works, and where things are harder to focus. We talked to employers and training advisors to understand the everyday realities on site and on the job.

From those insights, we pulled together real-world, practices that help employers overcome common challenges – things like staff retention, training drop-offs, and how to support workers through tough times.

Looking ahead

The Worker Support toolkit is part of a wider set of artefacts building on a synthesis of sector knowledge. Three documents have been produced to capture the research, insights, and impacts at different levels across the sector, including considerations for what comes next.

1. An **Insights Report** that explores current capability gaps and system-level barriers to providing effective worker support at scale as well as introducing six priority areas for change.
2. And a broader **roadmap** for the sector, which outlines actions at every level – from industry to government, to improve the level of support employers receive to do their job well.

As part of the roadmap, we've recommended that a formal definition and sector-wide framework be developed. That would help keep care, wellbeing, and workforce sustainability front and centre across the whole system.



**Construction and
Infrastructure sector:
Worker support
practice toolkit**

