



WeCount
LGBTQIA+ Representation in the Public Service

STATE SERVICES COMMISSION
TE KAWA MATAAHO



Inclusion & our Rainbow Public Service

Findings on common LGBTQIA+ barriers to workplace inclusion, and making WeCount count.

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Introduction

We recognise that as New Zealand's Public Service, we need to value, reflect and understand the communities we serve. Diversity is a driver of innovation; it improves decision-making, productivity and retention of staff.¹ Inclusive organisations foster a culture where employees can bring their whole selves to work without feeling the need to change aspects of themselves to fit in. Inclusion means moving beyond overcoming discrimination to actively working on ways that people are included for who they are. Through both diversity and inclusion, we can create visibility and proactively reinforce the sense that 'if I can see you, I can be you'.

The WeCount 2019 survey was developed by the State Services Commission (SSC) and the Cross-Agency Rainbow Network (CARN) to explore both the diversity (who we are) and inclusion (how we are) of our rainbow² public service employees. Inclusion has many indicators. The WeCount 2019 survey tool used 'comfort at work' and 'ease at being out' as indicators of inclusion. To measure the full workplace inclusion of rainbow public service employees would require a much broader range of variables than possible in this survey.

This document shares the main findings and themes that were collected through the survey. Some direct quotes have also been used to highlight some key points.³ All the information that was gathered in the survey is useful to us; it helps us to understand the current landscape, what we should do more of and what we need to change.

Thank you to those who participated in this survey. This information helps us to better understand the opinions, thoughts and feelings of our rainbow community. We strongly believe that ensuring inclusion for members of our own rainbow community enables the public service to better support all New Zealanders.

¹ Bourke, J., & Dillion, B. (2018). The diversity and inclusion revolution: eight powerful truths. Deloitte Review(22); Merelo, G. (2019) Workplace Diversity Case Model. Diversity Works.

² Rainbow is an umbrella term used to describe lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual and others with diverse sexualities and gender identities.

³ Please remember that support is available to you. You may choose to contact your HR representative for in-work support or if you are more comfortable contacting an external network, support can be found at OUTline NZ on 0800 668 5463, the Ministry of Health helpline on 1737 (text or call) or the PSA Rainbow Support Network on 0508 367 772.

The WeCount 2019 overview

Why have we conducted this survey?

State Services Commission (SSC) and the Cross-Agency Rainbow Network (CARN) identified a lack of available workforce data about the New Zealand public service rainbow community. Without this data it's hard for people to get a sense of being counted and know that they matter.

The WeCount 2019 survey was developed to address this issue and to explore the often-invisible barriers to inclusion faced by rainbow public servants. We want this to start or further discussions on how to best support our public service rainbow community.

*“...I appreciate this survey being conducted
and the respectful use of language
surrounding gender and the inclusion of
bisexual, pansexual and asexual”*

We recognise that as New Zealand's public service, we need to value, reflect and understand the communities we serve. Having a more diverse workforce leads to better outcomes for the people served by the public service.

Language, interpretation and accessibility

The WeCount 2019 survey and this findings document have committed to using appropriate LGBTQIA+ and rainbow terms. Throughout the document we use rainbow as an umbrella term to refer to the LGBTQIA+ population which includes (but is not limited to) identities such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, non-binary, gender diverse, transgender, fa'fafafine, takatāpui, whakawahine, tangata ira tane, fakaleiti, akava'ine, intersex, queer, questioning, asexual and more.

When referring to the rainbow community or population, we mean the rainbow or LGBTQIA+ community or population of the public service workforce. The term community is used to indicate a sense of belonging; the term population refers to measurable diversity within the community.

It is also important to acknowledge that although the term rainbow is often used to describe one aspect of diversity, there is significant diversity of age, ethnicity, occupations, abilities, and lived experiences across members of the rainbow community. It is not a homogenous population. Understanding the intersectionality, then, helps create understanding that low levels of comfort may change across the life span, or differ between different ethnic, age and occupational groups.

Inclusive language such as 'we' and 'our' is used throughout this document. 'We' refers to either the State Services Commission (SSC) or the broader public service dependent on context, and 'our' refers to the broader public service. This document will be made fully accessible.

Response rates and engagement

The survey was conducted over four weeks from 6 – 31 May 2019. The rainbow population count of the public service workforce from this survey is 1,191.⁴ This count is greater than the number of complete responses (1,078) as some people have multiple identifiers. For example, someone may identify as both gay and transgender. For the purpose of this data analysis we have counted those with more than one identity twice.

Findings from the Workplace Dynamics Survey 2016⁵ indicate that approximately 7% of the public service workforce identify as having a non-heterosexual orientation. Based on this estimate, the WeCount 2019 survey captured approximately 30% of the public service rainbow population. Given the response rate and survey methodology the following results may not always reflect the whole rainbow population.

Some agencies had conducted internal diversity and inclusion surveys, just prior to the WeCount 2019 survey. It is possible that this contributed to the low response rate. Anecdotally, we heard that some people were unclear about the purpose and intent of this data collection, causing a reluctance to participate. We also know some people have never felt able to be 'out' and despite assurances of anonymity were still reluctant to participate.

We took particular care to protect the anonymity of respondents. These findings are at a systems level. Very early on in the analysis of the data the decision was made to not pursue agency-level reporting for the following reasons:

- not all agencies would have been represented due to small response numbers in some agencies and the potential to compromise respondent anonymity;
- if some agencies were not included it could give the unintended impression that responses from those agencies, and therefore people, didn't count; and
- there was consistency of themes arising across all agencies in terms of levels of comfort and what helped.

The WeCount 2019 survey has generated lessons beyond the survey findings. These lessons will be helpful in any future engagement with the rainbow community as we continue to build an inclusive public service. Full technical notes on the methodology and interpretation can be found in Appendix 1.

⁴ The 1,191 identities equates to 2.2% of the total headcount based on the 2019 Public Service Workforce data.

⁵ Plimmer, G., Cantal, C. (2016). Workplace Dynamics in New Zealand Public Services. Wellington: Centre for Labour, Employment and Work, Victoria University of Wellington.

Findings from the WeCount 2019 survey

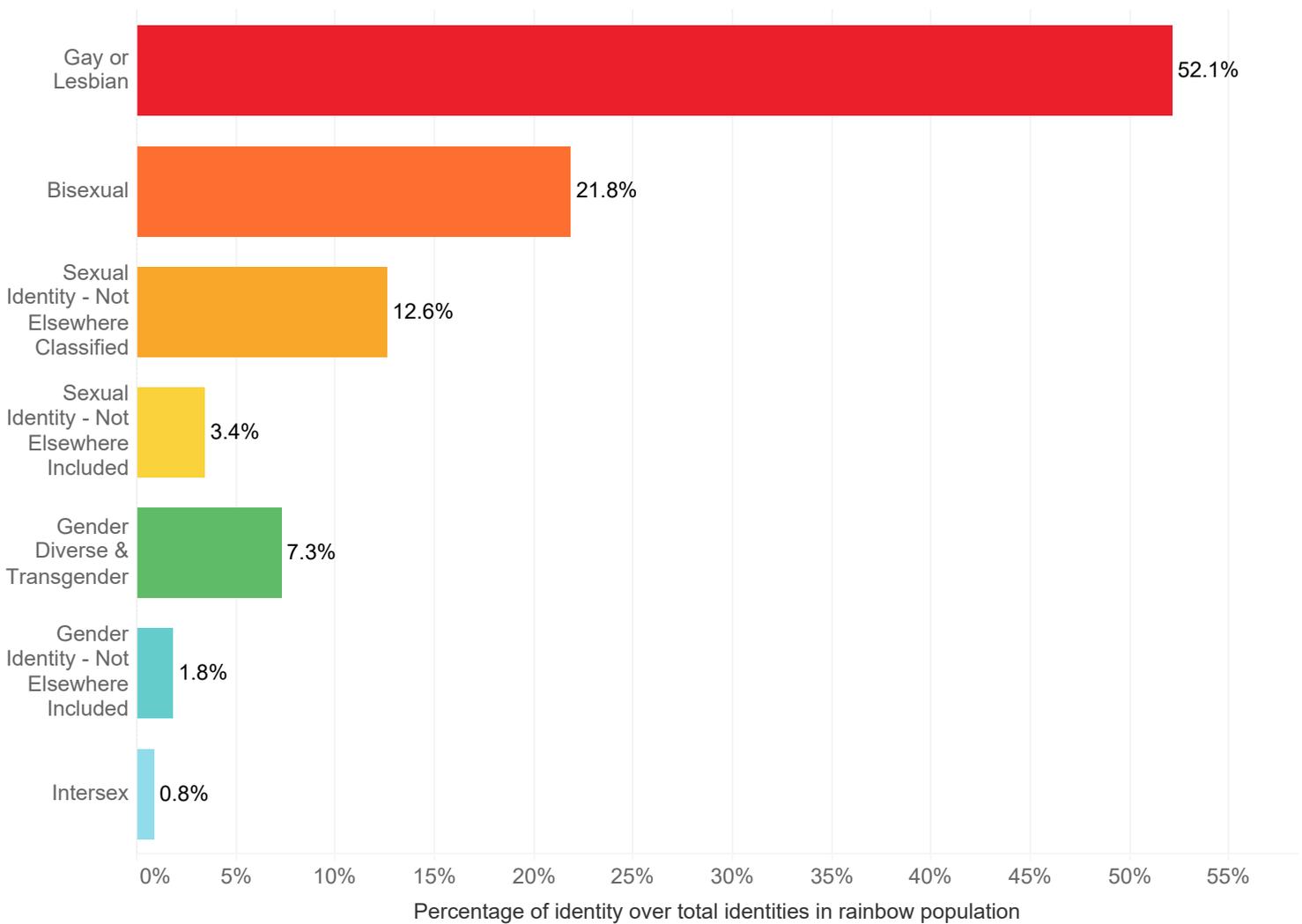
Respondents only answered questions that they felt comfortable answering. The quantitative data has been analysed and is graphically represented over the following pages. The WeCount 2019 survey also received over 3,000 individual comments which provided rich qualitative data. This commentary has been used to inform themes. Those themes and some direct quotes are used throughout this document.

Identity of the rainbow population

The largest group in the sexual identity categories is 'gay or lesbian' with 621 respondents. 260 respondents identified as bisexual.

Combined, 87 respondents identify as either gender diverse or transgender. Ten respondents identify as intersex. To ensure the confidentiality of the respondents who are intersex some data has been suppressed in the following findings.

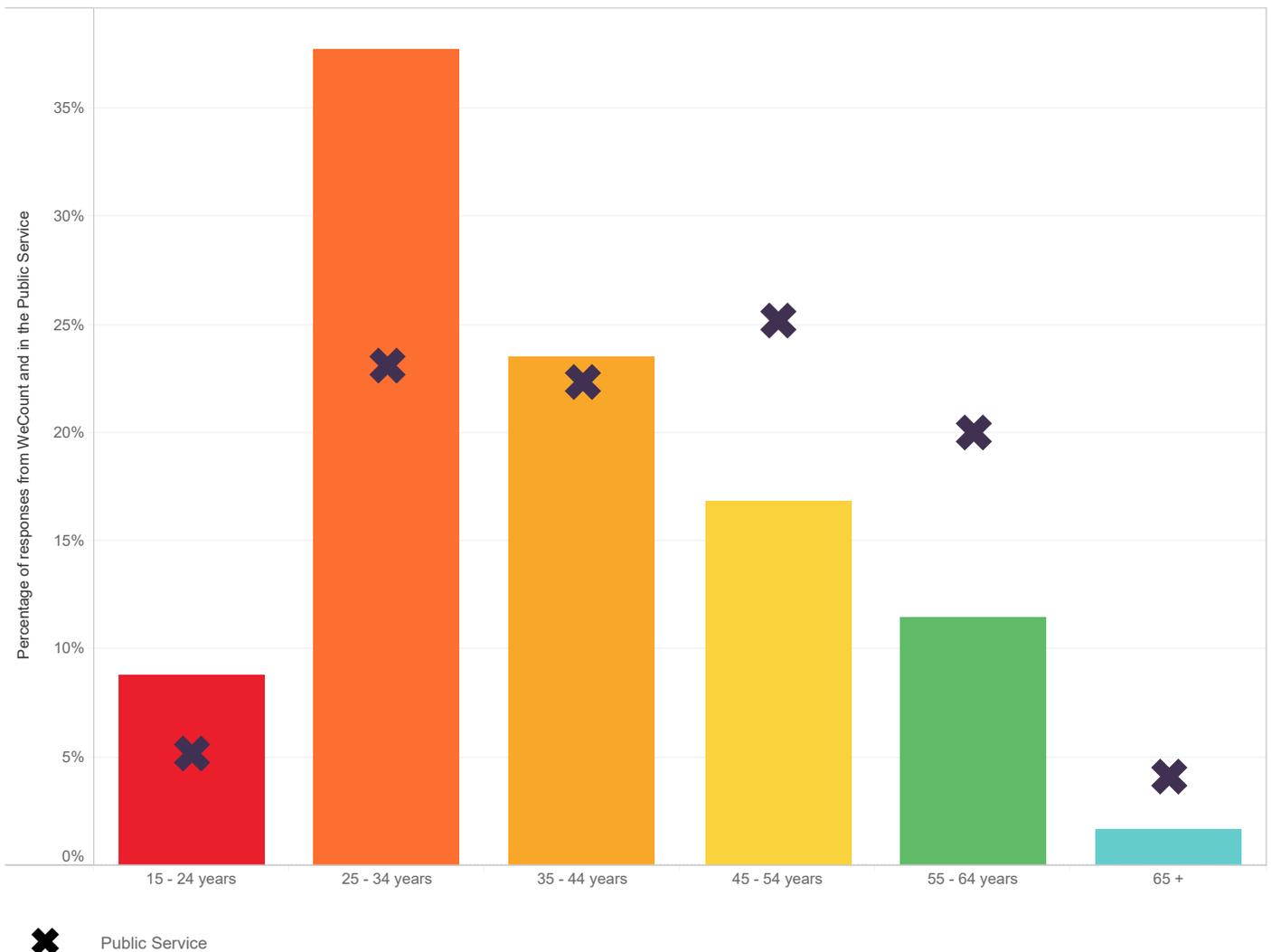
Rainbow community and identity



“because the level of acceptance for LGBTQIA+ intersects with race, culture and gender there will be queer people who are more or less comfortable... there are different impacts for different generations and role types”

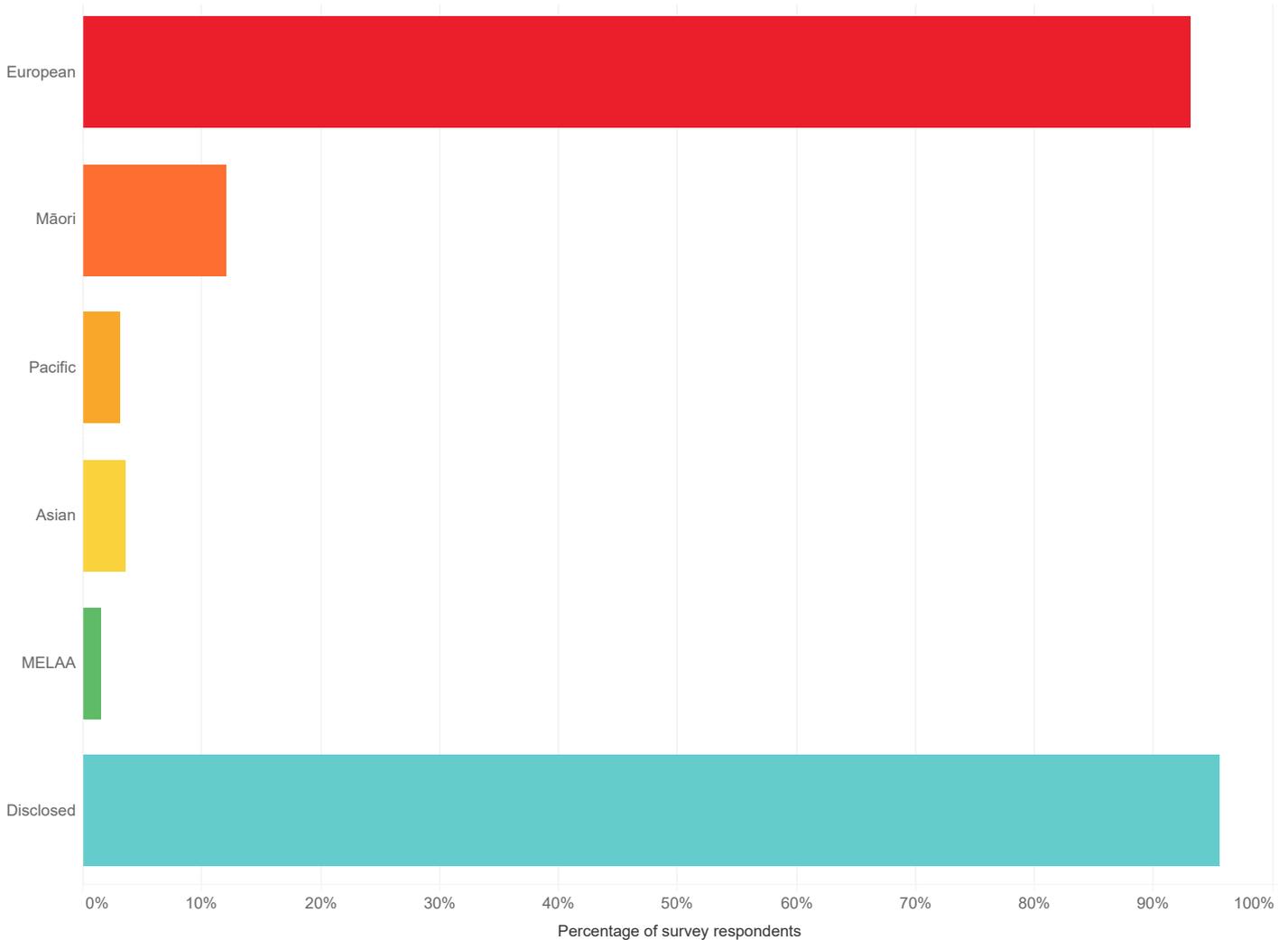
Rainbow community by age range

There were respondents from all age groups. The highest proportion of respondents were 25 to 34 year olds at 37.7%. This is a higher proportion than the 23.1% that this age group makes up in the overall public service workforce. The lowest proportion of responses were received by those aged 65 years and over at 1.7%. This age group makes up 4.1% of the total public sector workforce.



Ethnicity and the rainbow population

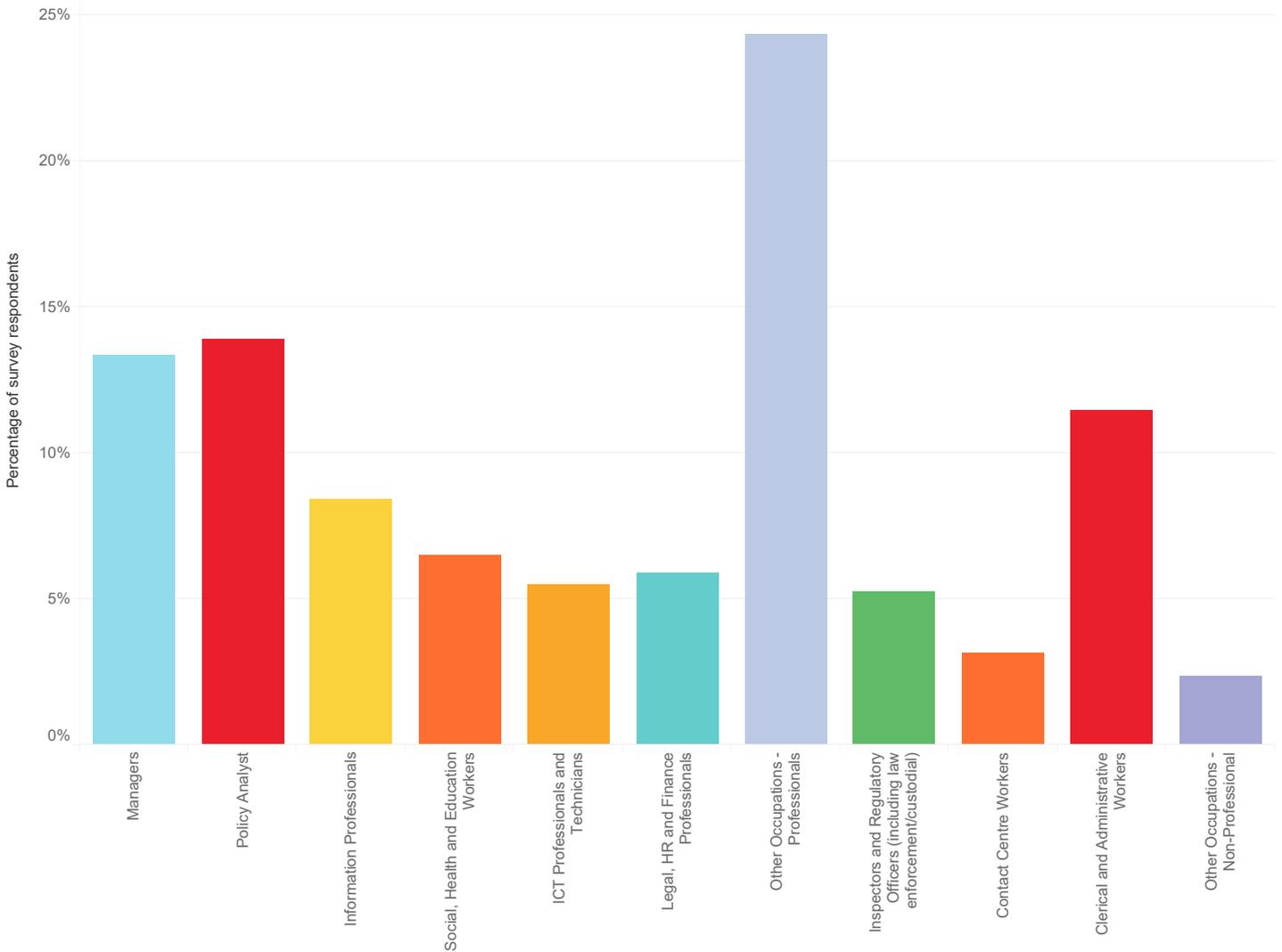
95.6% of respondents answered this question. Some people identified with more than one ethnicity. 93.1% of respondents identified as European and 12.1% identified as Māori. This compares to 67.3% and 15.5% respectively of the total public service workforce. The ethnic group with the lowest number of respondents was the Middle Eastern Latin American and African group (MELAA) at 1.6%. This compares with 1.5% of the public service workforce. The ethnicity breakdown was calculated by dividing the number of people who identify as a particular ethnic group by the total number of people who provided an ethnicity response to this question.



(MELAA) - Middle Eastern Latin American and African group

Occupational groups and the rainbow population

13.4% of respondents were managers compared with 11.7% of the total public service workforce. 64.4% of respondents were professionals compared with 48.9% of the total public service workforce. 22.2% were in non-professional roles compared with 39.4% of the public service workforce.

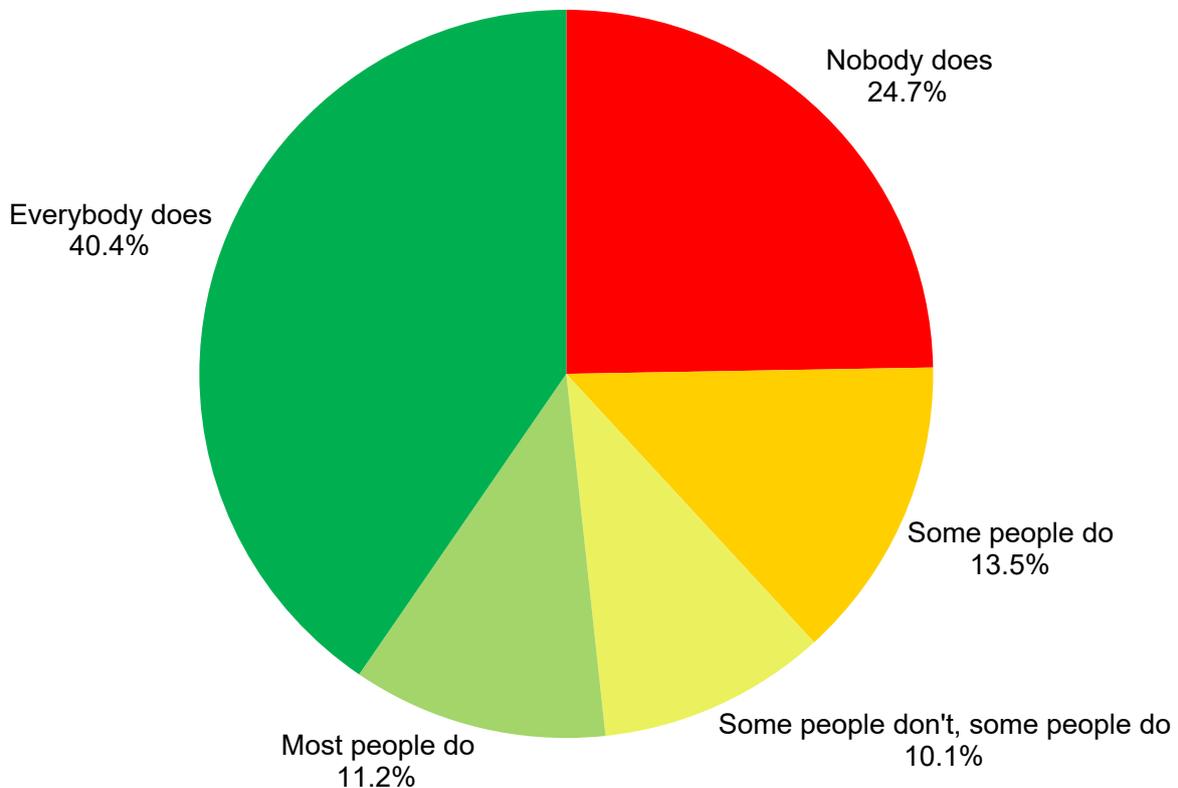


Identity and pronouns

WeCount 2019 queried if respondents were gendered correctly at work, as in, did their colleagues use their correct name and pronouns. Nearly a quarter of the responses to this question said that nobody at their work got this right. Just over half said that all or most of their colleagues did get it right. Some people relayed experiences where work colleagues often made assumptions based on appearances and their hetero-normative beliefs. These assumptions can be difficult to correct. Having the correct pronoun and name used can indicate safety and belonging. Deliberate misgendering, incorrect name use and micro-aggressions veiled as humour create a very real sense of not having one's whole self being included and/or that that self is of lesser value than another person.

Assumptions can create a sense of being invisible. Challenging assumptions requires ongoing mental energy, the burden of which must be shared by all people. WeCount 2019 told us that colleagues, managers and others getting pronouns and names right matters in the workplace.

Do colleagues gender you correctly? E.g. use the correct name and pronoun

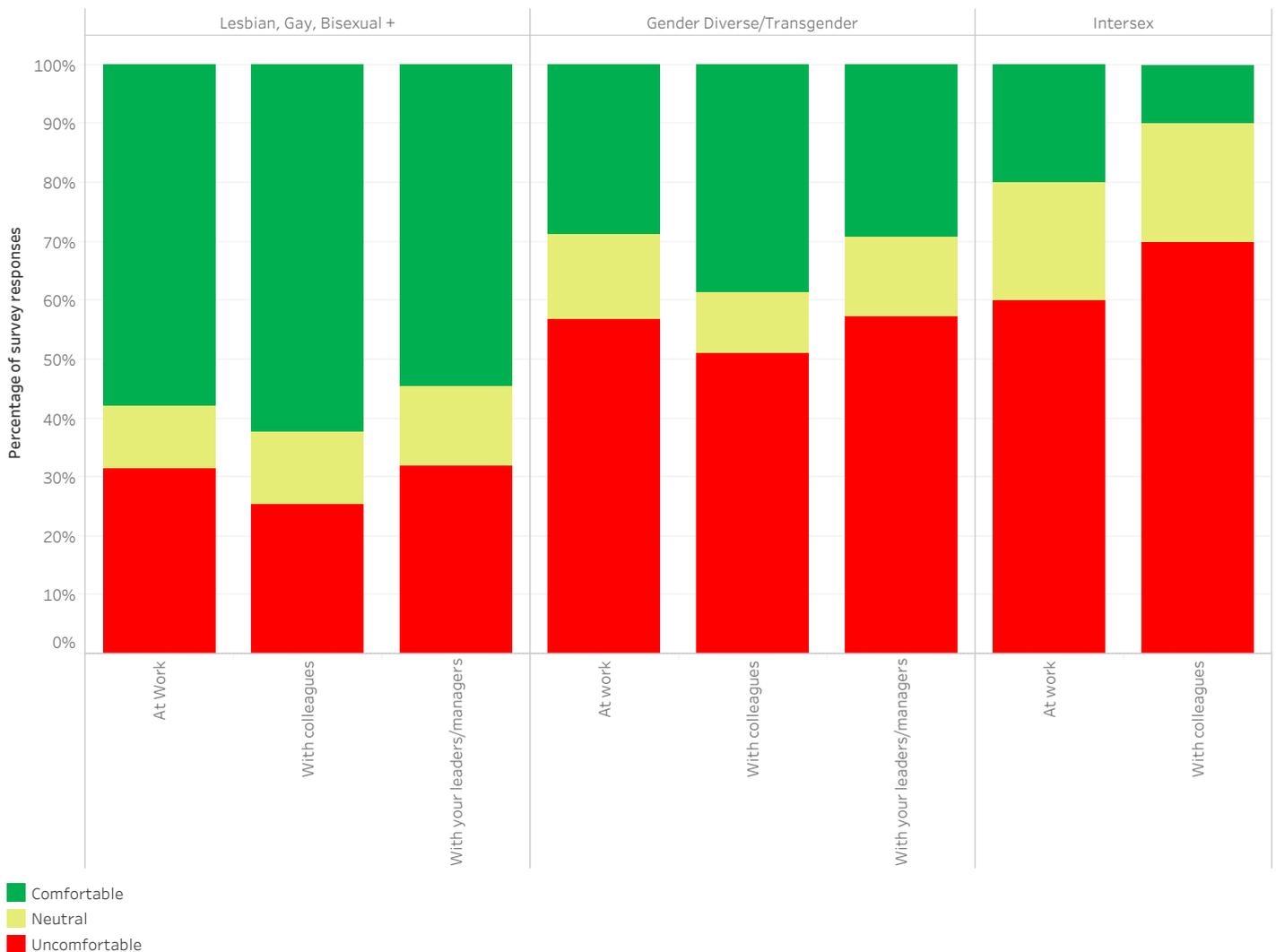


“Inclusive, caring and supportive work colleagues enable me to be open about my identity”

*“I’m very out at work as *queer*...I’m just not comfortable with being specific...”*

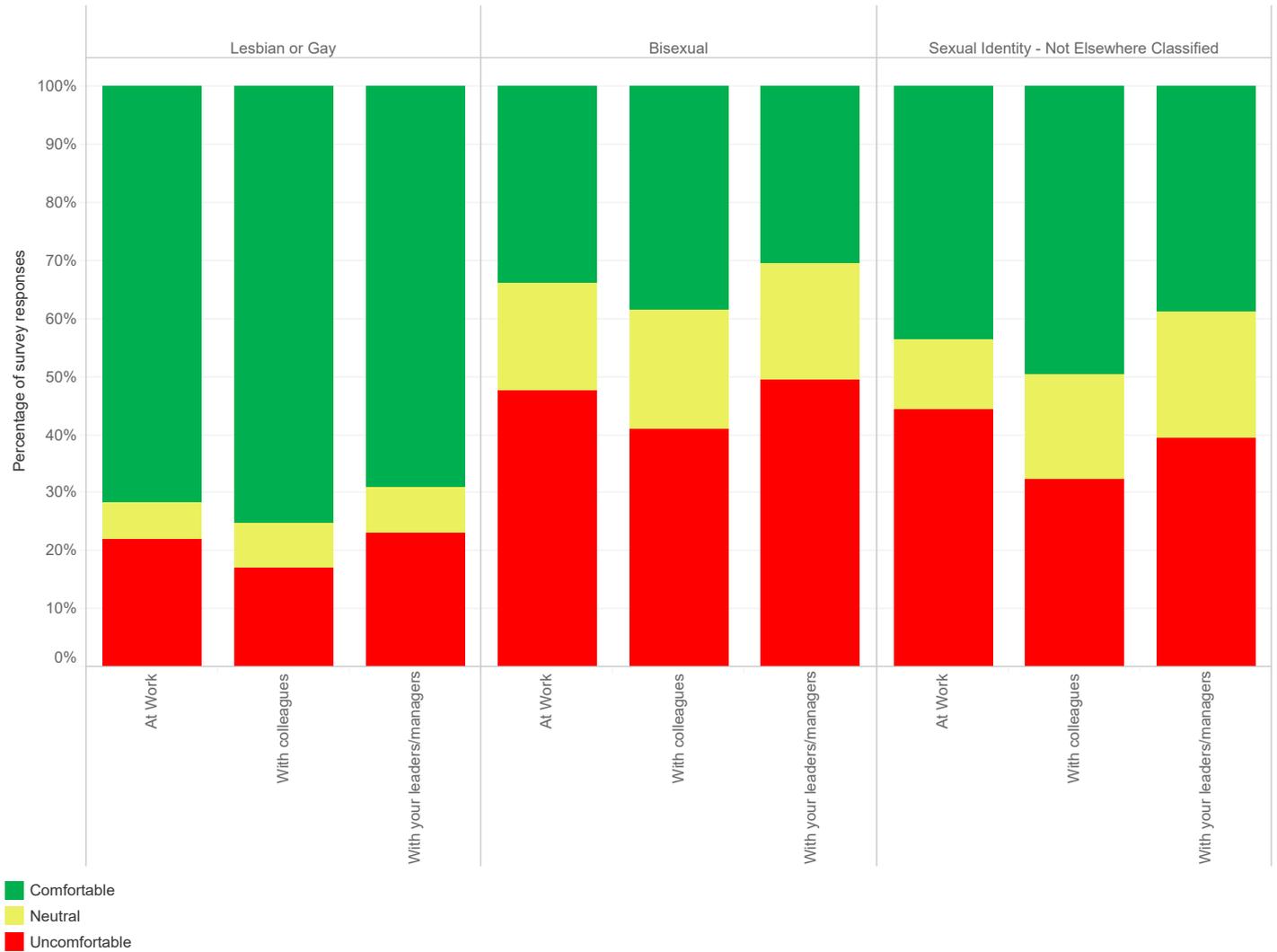
People responded about how comfortable they felt with being open or ‘out’ at work. This was asked of how people felt at work, with their colleagues and with their leaders or managers. These findings indicate that those who identify within the lesbian, gay, bisexual, plus (LGB+) group are generally more comfortable than those who identify as gender diverse or transgender or intersex. There are generally greater levels of comfort with colleagues than with managers/leaders or at work in general.

Comfort with being open or ‘out’



There was noteworthy variance in the LGB+ grouping in the comfort of being open or 'out' at work. The following breakdown indicates that those that identify as bisexual are much less comfortable compared to those who identify as either lesbian, gay or an unclassified sexual identity. Anecdotally, we know that those who identify as bisexual can experience higher levels of discrimination, both outside and within the rainbow community. WeCount 2019 confirmed this. It indicates that at a societal level there is still work to do to challenge such discrimination.

Comfort with being open or 'out' – breakdown by sexual identity

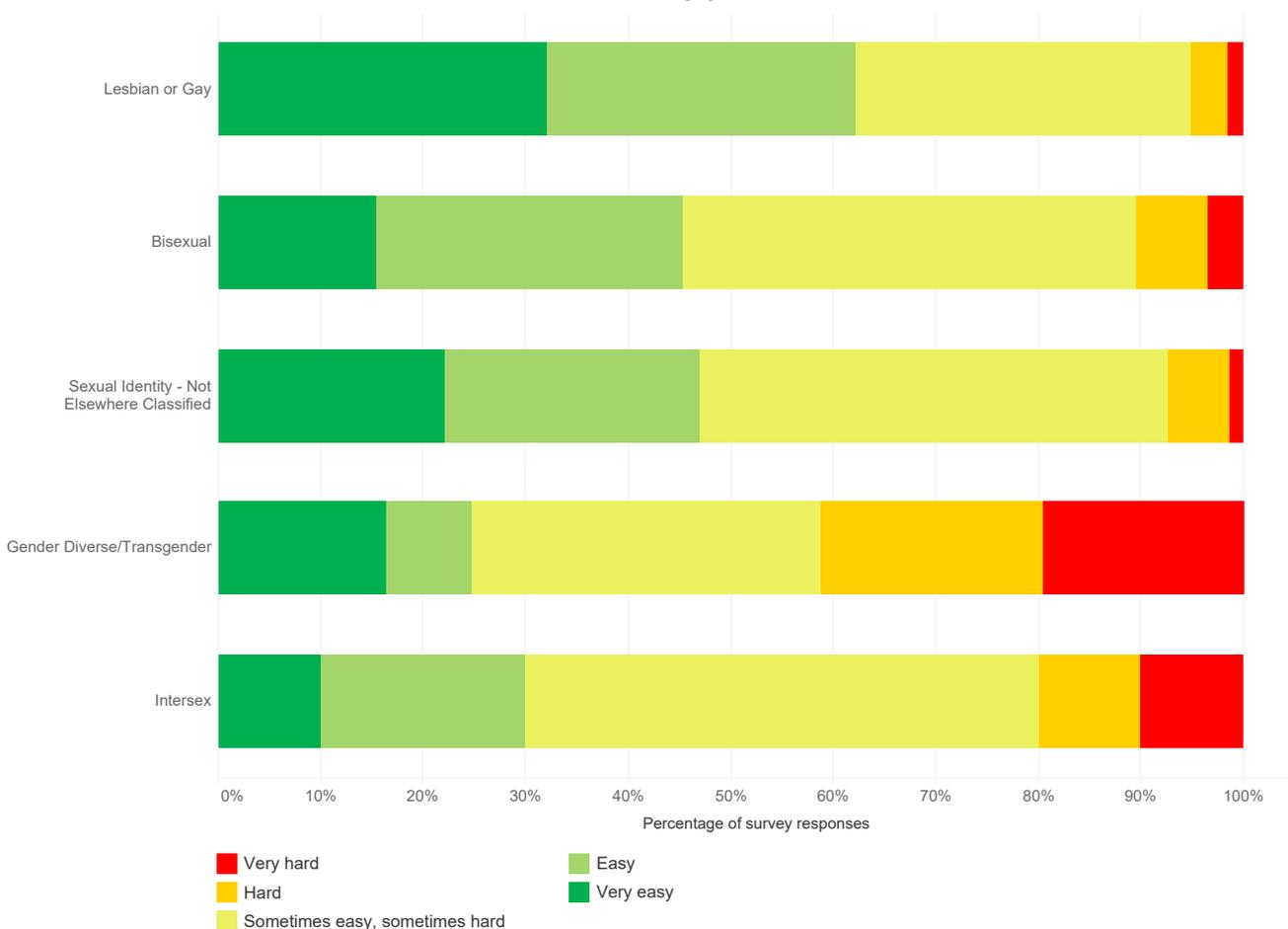


Ease of being yourself at work

“It really helps having a CEO who talks about diversity and isn’t embarrassed to use LGBTQIA+ terms”

The WeCount 2019 survey asked about the ease of being yourself at work. The gender diverse and transgender group experienced the most difficulty in being themselves at work. This was considerably higher than the LGB+ and intersex groups. All the groups (LGB+, gender diverse and transgender, and intersex) responded at high levels that it could be sometimes easy, sometimes hard. This indicates that regardless of one’s identity the ease of being yourself at work is dependent on the specific environment and situation at the time. We know that within the rainbow community being bisexual, transgender, intersex or gender diverse can be particularly difficult and isolating. The respondents here confirmed that in their workplaces.

Ease of being yourself at work



“I have seen great change...but feel that we have a long way to go with being inclusive of transgender staff.”

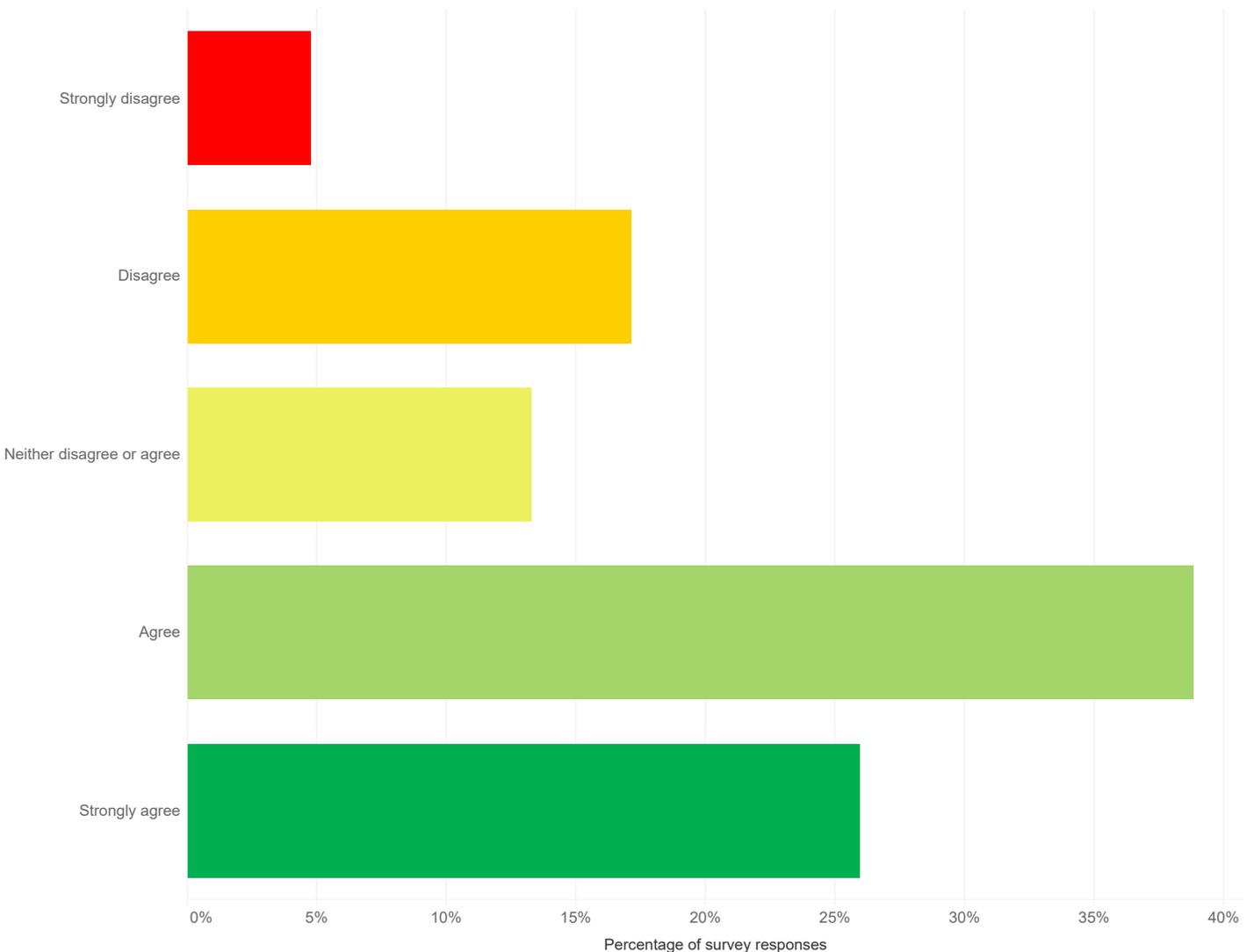
Bringing your whole self to work

“It’s way better than it was, but I don’t think that I’m bringing my whole, whole self to work.”

Almost two thirds of respondents (64.8%) agree or strongly agree that they feel comfortable bringing their whole self to work. A common theme from those who felt uncomfortable at work was around the risk or potential harm to career aspirations if they were open about who they are. The qualitative data identified further themes around the importance of supportive and caring immediate and sometimes senior managers. It was noted that this support enables people to be happy to be open about themselves.

Some respondents spoke of self-limiting their own aspirations in order to ‘not come out’. That people are limiting their own careers for fear of the impact of who they are indicates that there is work to be done. We want all our people, in all our workplaces to feel valued, supported and respected.

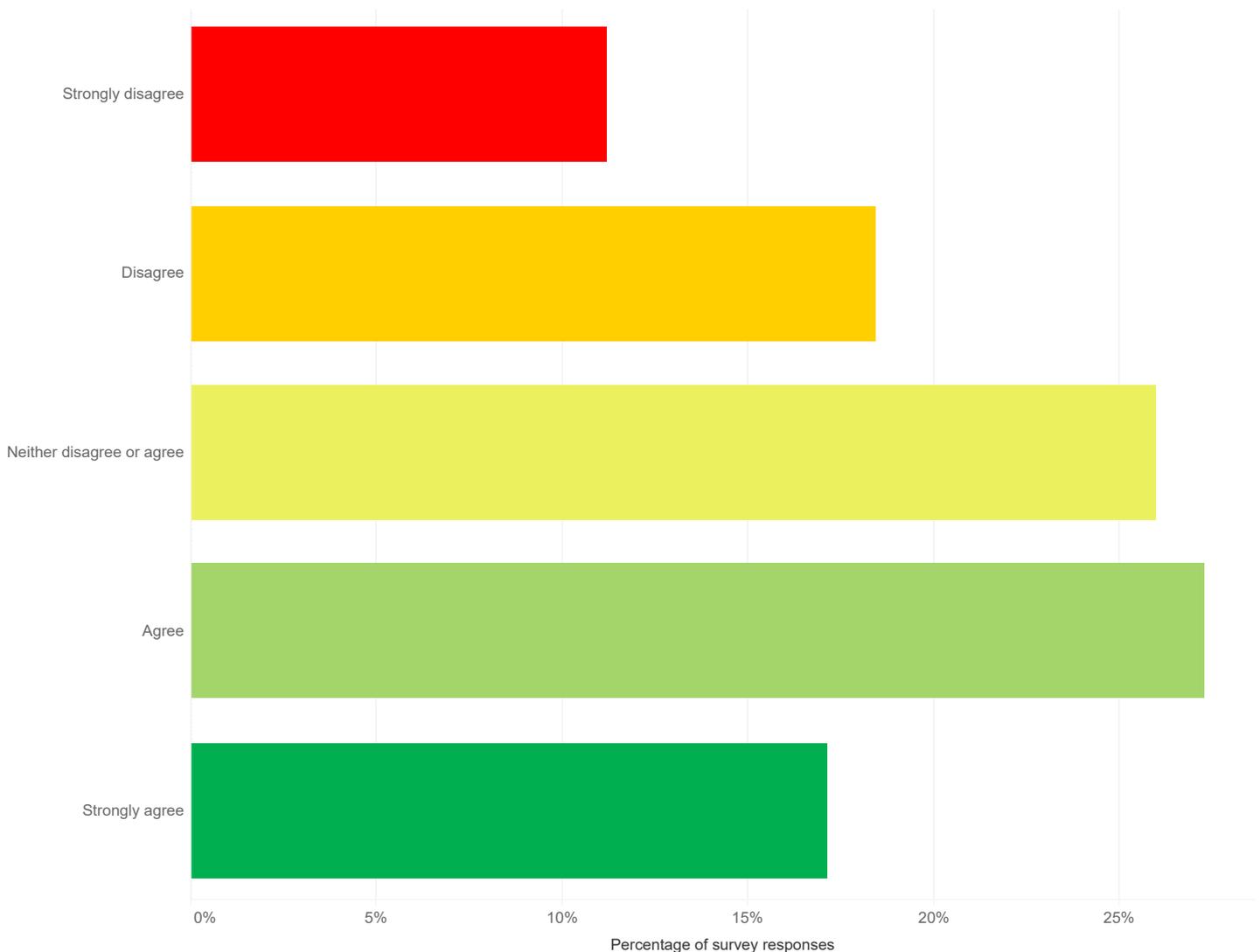
I feel comfortable bringing my whole self to work



Interacting with those opposed to the rainbow community

Just under half of respondents (44.4%) either agreed or strongly agreed that they avoid collaborating or interacting with workmates who they know or feel have views opposed to the LGBTQIA+ communities. A common theme from the qualitative data was the importance of respect and tolerance. Some respondents acknowledged that although there were some positive changes that there is still some way to go. Our respondents told us that workplaces with a traditional masculine culture and/or male dominated workforce created a lesser sense of collaborating or interaction between rainbow employees and others.

“I avoid collaborating or interacting with workmates who I know, or feel, have views opposed to the LGBTQIA+ communities”



Some people feel accepted and not judged by their colleagues and managers but sadly not all had such positive experiences

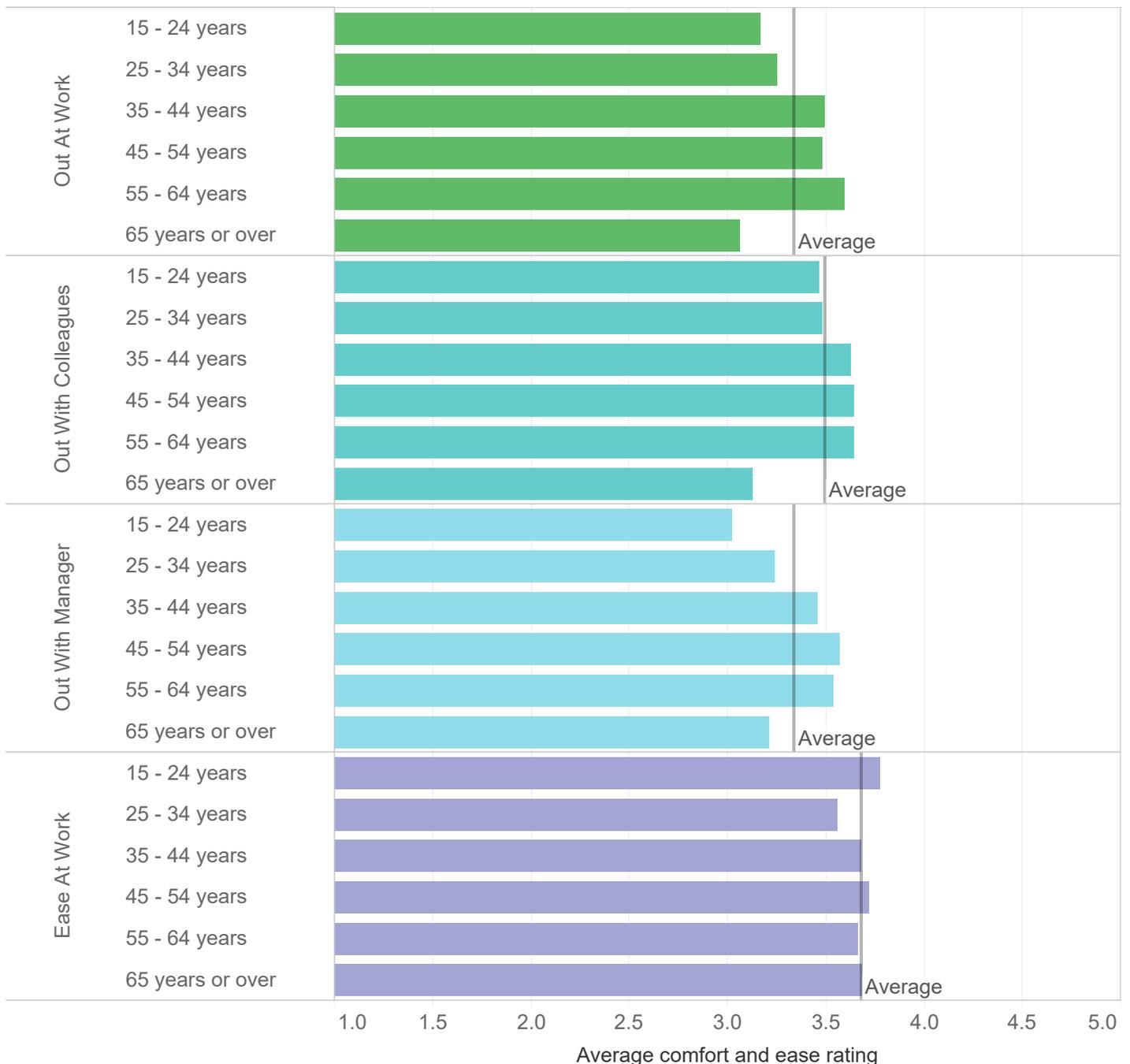
Comfort levels at work by age, role type and ethnicity

Being comfortable or feeling like it's easy to be yourself at work can be one indicator of workplace inclusivity.

By age range

The average comfort of respondents about being open or "out" increases with age. This potentially indicates that as you get older you become more comfortable, however the average of comfort does drop for those over the age of 65. We would expect this as until the mid-1980s homosexuality was criminalised, intersex people were all but invisible and there was little understanding of gender that did not align to a person's anatomy. This differs from the ease of being yourself at work. Those in the youngest age group '15 - 24 years' found it, on average, the easiest to be themselves. In this chart, higher ratings mean higher levels of ease or comfort.

Comfort being 'out' and ease of being yourself by age range



By role type

'Managers' and 'legal, human resources and finance professionals' have the highest average comfort ratings. Respondents from the 'other occupations – non-professionals' group had the lowest average ratings of comfort being out at work and with colleagues. Contact centre workers reported having the lowest level of comfort with managers/leaders. They also reported having the second lowest average of comfort being out with their colleagues.

In this chart, higher ratings mean higher levels of ease or comfort.

Comfort being 'out' and ease of being yourself by role type

Type of role	Out At Work	Out With Colleagues	Out With Manager	Ease At Work
Managers	3.73	3.87	3.70	3.79
Policy Analyst	3.43	3.67	3.42	3.82
Information Professionals	3.19	3.45	3.36	3.44
Social, Health and Education Workers	3.15	3.43	3.30	3.62
ICT Professionals and Technicians	3.47	3.64	3.27	3.68
Legal, HR and Finance Professionals	3.69	3.91	3.67	3.75
Other Occupations - Professionals	3.42	3.62	3.32	3.66
Inspectors and Regulatory Officers (including law enforcement/custodial)	3.39	3.57	3.33	4.00
Contact Centre Workers	3.24	3.24	3.09	3.58
Clerical and Administrative Workers	3.37	3.44	3.34	3.55
Other Occupations - Non-Professional	2.89	3.00	3.26	3.44

“Even though it’s good, there are limits to your ability to be out. I’m always cautious”

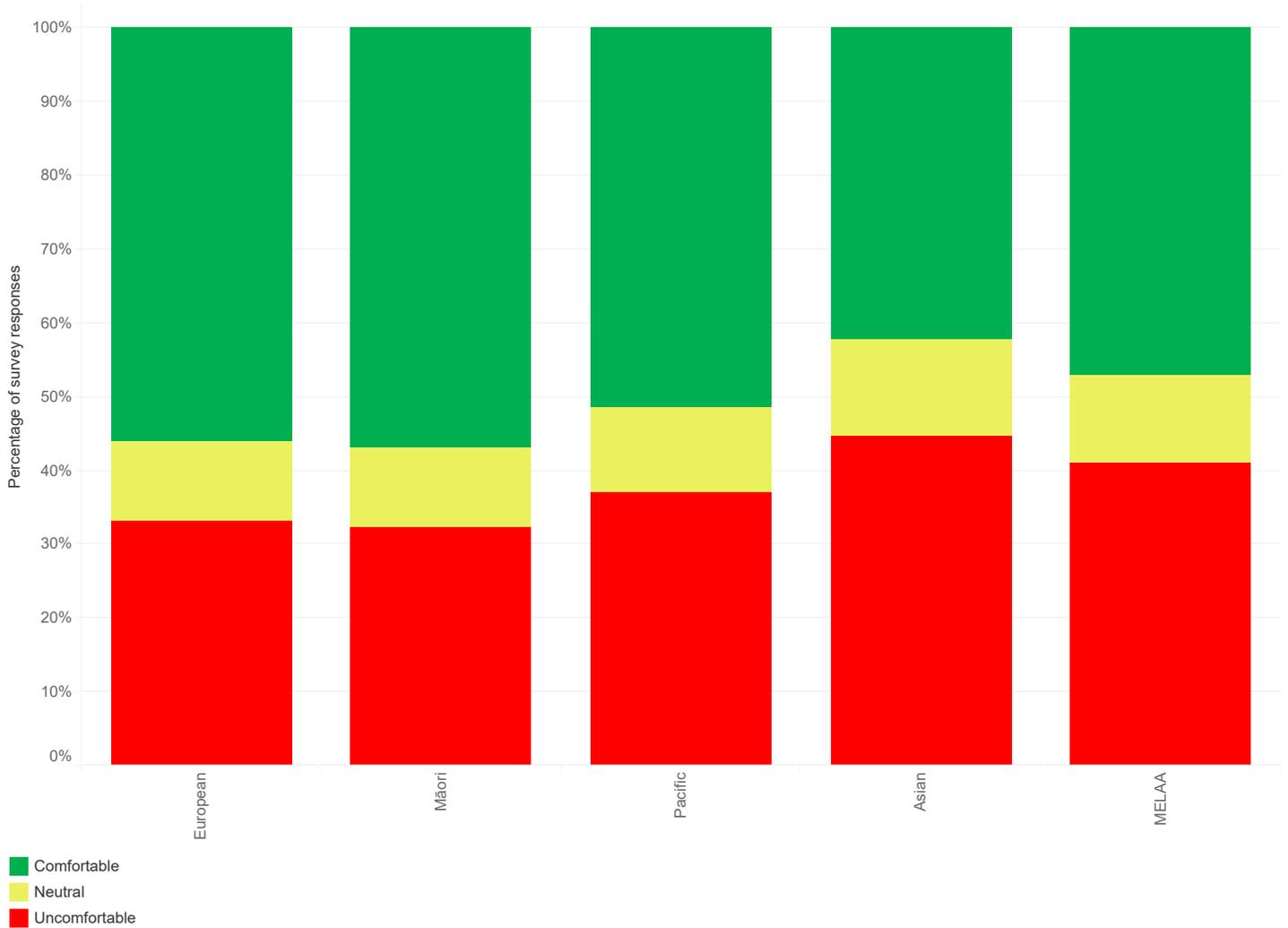
By ethnicity

Comfort being out at work

European and Māori respondents felt the most comfortable at work and reported the least amount of discomfort at being 'out' or open at work. Asian and MELAA (Middle Eastern/Latin American/African) respondents felt the most uncomfortable at work.

Being out can indicate a sense of belonging. Comfort at work by ethnicity can parallel a person's lived experience of inclusion within their own ethnic group's attitudes to sexuality and gender identity.

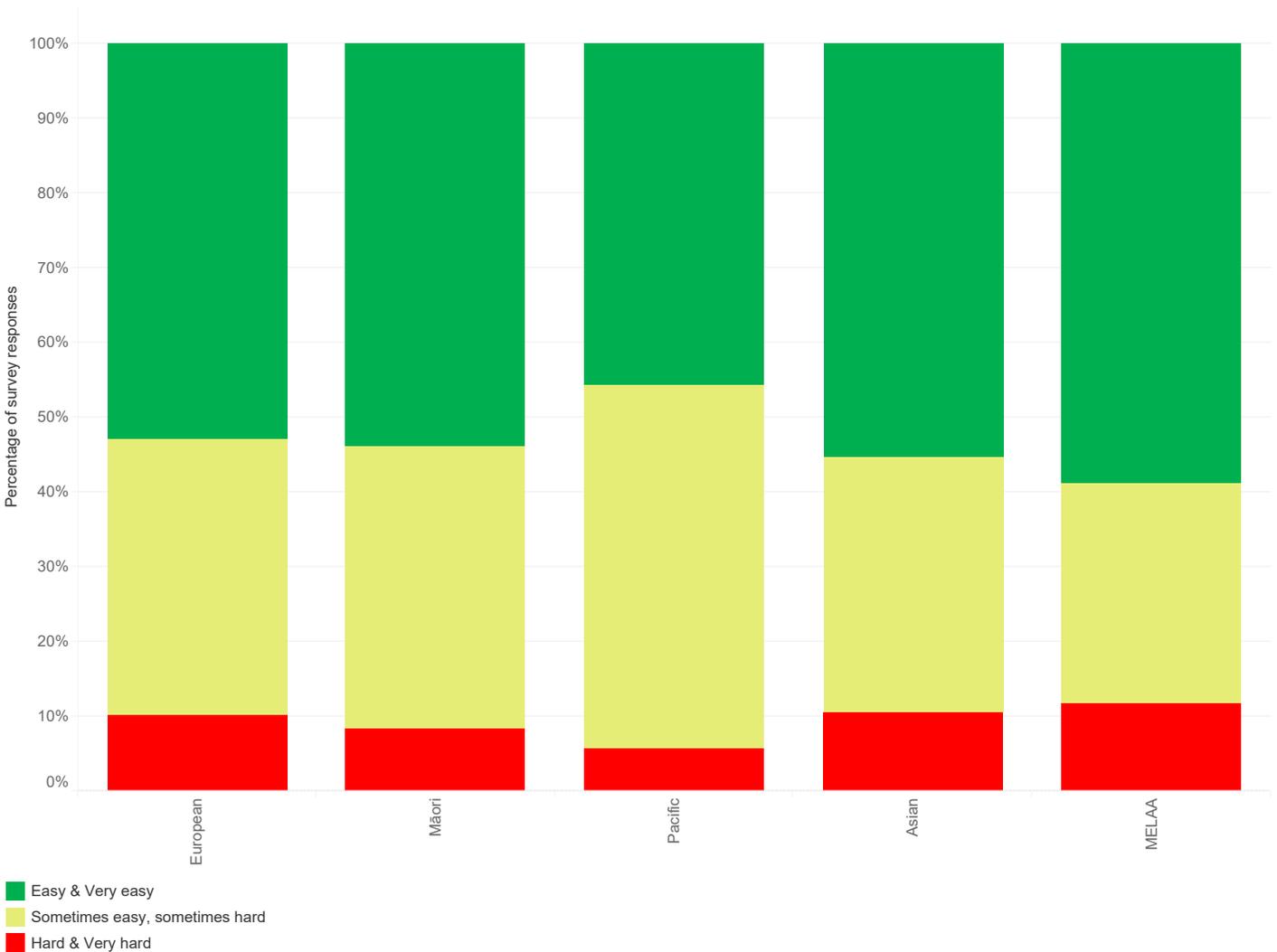
Comfort at work



Ease of being yourself

Data for ease of being yourself was similar across ethnic groups, except for Pacific respondents who were more likely to report finding it sometimes easy, sometimes hard. The MELAA (Middle Eastern/Latin American/African) and Asian ethnicity groups have the highest proportion that found it very easy or easy to be themselves despite the previous findings that they felt the most uncomfortable being out at work.

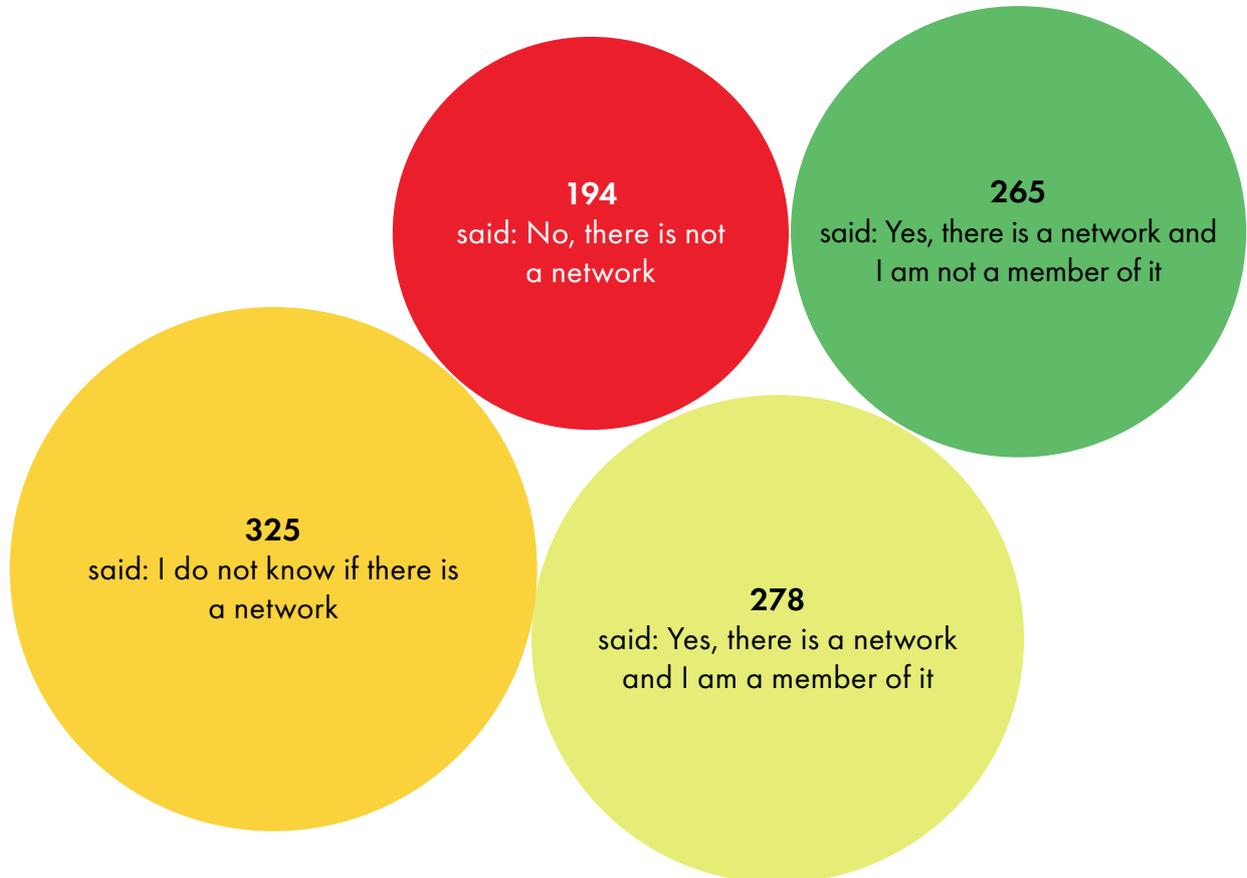
It's important to recognise that many people find it easy to be themselves, however doing so doesn't always imply that it is a comfortable situation. The two indicators have subtle, but significant differences.



Rainbow networks

Employee-led networks play a significant role in creating inclusive workplaces. Rainbow networks in workplaces are one way of encouraging inclusivity and improving visibility for the rainbow community.

“Is there a rainbow network at your workplace?
If so are you a member of it?”



Further analysis did show that those who had rainbow networks within their organisations were more comfortable being ‘out’ or open than those that worked in organisations without rainbow networks. This was irrespective of membership in the network. The existence of a rainbow network within a workplace provided a sense of belonging, of inclusion.

Some respondents told us that there is a lack of a ‘rainbow organisation’ or ‘LGBTQIA+ forums in the Public Service’ or no rainbow related or publicised active awareness movements within some organisations. What this tells us is that there is further work to do, so that everyone has access to networks across the public service.

“I feel that a lot of closeted/questioning staff, as well as ‘out’ staff would benefit from a secure, confidential social network where we would be able to comfortably be ourselves.”

The key themes

A wide range of information was garnered from the WeCount 2019 survey. This information can be distilled into two key themes:

What a good workplace looks like

- supportive
- open-minded
- gender and sexuality diversity is normalised through knowledge
- good teams have supportive colleagues/managers
- diversity and difference are seen as strengths
- visible leadership
- values people for their abilities
- respectful and tolerant

What we need to work on

- ensuring that judgemental behaviour is identified and appropriately dealt with
- ensuring that no one feels vulnerable and/or intimidated at work
- ensuring that all of our employees are comfortable being themselves at work
- improving recruitment and progression practices
- shifting mindsets and encouraging education

Overall, workplaces within the public service were identified as good workplaces however this survey tells us where we can do better.

Next steps

WeCount 2019 was a first step to include rainbow people in the public service data. These findings helped us produce a more comprehensive Public Service Workforce data set than ever before. We've made sure that rainbow people in the public service count. It's not only about the numbers though. These findings also help us understand where we can make more of a difference for rainbow public servants, as we continue to build a diverse and inclusive public service.

The voices of the rainbow community and these system level findings have shown us that we have come some of the way, but that we have further work to do. We want all our people to be comfortable being themselves at work, every day and in every situation.

Over the coming year there will be increased emphasis on chief executives' being accountable for diversity and inclusion within their agency. Chief executives have committed to leading and building a positive and safe workplace culture in their agencies. Across the public service, we are working on inclusive leadership, addressing bias, creating tools for using inclusive language and promoting employee-led networks. Together, these actions will improve the level of comfort and ability to bring one's whole self to work for all public servants.

Appendix 1 - Technical notes

Survey Information

WeCount 2019 was conducted between the 6th to the 31st of May. There were 2,571 total responses to this survey, of which only 1,766 respondents were part of the LGBTQIA+ communities and only 1,565 were complete responses. Following data validation, the number of usable responses for employees in the core Public Service is 1,078. The findings from the survey is based on the 1,078 responses. There were an additional 368 responses from employees in the State Services LT agencies, and an additional 119 responses from those employed at agencies out of scope of this survey.

Respondents who did not identify as LGBTQIA+ and/or who were not employed at agencies in scope of this survey were excluded from this final count. A small number of the 1,191 identities in the gender or sexual not elsewhere included categories are not represented in some graphs.

Interpreting the findings

The dataset obtained from the survey represents a self-selected sample and is not representative of all rainbow people in the New Zealand Public Service. In addition, respondents willing to self-identify as LGBTQIA+ may be different from, or have different experiences to, people who do not wish to disclose their LGBTQIA+ status, even in an anonymous survey. As such, findings reported here only apply to the respondents to the WeCount 2019 survey and not to the general rainbow population.

Due to the lack of data on the rainbow population within the Public Service, it was not possible to weight the survey findings to be representative of all LGBTQIA+ people, nor was it possible to weight the data, for example for non-response, as it was not based on a sample. Similarly, standard confidence intervals and statistical testing were not appropriate because the data was not based on a representative sample.

Methodology

Stats NZ's Statistical Standards on Sexual Identity and Gender Identity have been used in the questionnaire design and reporting. Sexual identity has been expanded from the categories noted in the Stats Standard based on advice from CARN e.g. asexual and pansexual has been included as response options in the questionnaire. Results have been aggregated into the Stats Standard level. Gender identity has also been captured slightly differently to the Stats Standard recommended grouping based on advice from CARN, e.g. gender diverse has been changed to non-binary. Note that the Gender Identity Statistical Standard is currently under review.

Where respondents selected the 'prefer to self-describe option', these values have been recoded back to the relevant classification category where possible. This was completed by using the Stats NZ synonym files and matching those self-described values back to the classification. Most people provided a single response to the identity questions. A few provided multiple responses. In these cases, we included their answers under each identity (e.g. a person who identifies as gay and transgender).⁶

Where a response was coded to a residual category (Refused, Unidentifiable or Outside of Scope) we grouped these categories together into a 'Not elsewhere included' group. These responses are still included in the results.

Ratings

Most questions used a five-point Likert scale with 1 being very hard or very uncomfortable and 5 being very easy, or very comfortable. In the results we present here, we either group these into three categories (1/2, 3, 4/5) or average across the five-point scale.

⁶ This is the approach that is typically taken when analysing ethnicity data for those with multiple ethnicities.



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LGBTQIA+ Representation in the Public Service