



PHF
Science

Gender Equality Statement

September 2025

WE ARE THE NEW ZEALAND INSTITUTE FOR
PUBLIC HEALTH AND FORENSIC SCIENCE

PHF Science Gender Equality Statement

The New Zealand Institute for Public Health and Forensic Science (PHF Science), formerly known as the Institute of Environment Science and Research (ESR), is a New Zealand Government owned research organisation that plays a critical national role in public health and forensics, and is a key contributor to environment and biosecurity outcomes.

PHF Science supports gender equity to benefit research and innovation (R&I) by improving the quality and relevance of R&I, attracting and retaining more talent, and ensuring that everyone can maximise their potential. This Gender Equality Statement outlines the initiatives we have in place and the objectives we are working towards. Many of these objectives and initiatives are in other formal documents within the organisation.

People are the heart of PHF Science, and our People Policy provides the overarching framework for how we will deliver on our aspiration of being an employer of choice, with a healthy work environment encouraging growth and wellbeing.

We are committed to:

- Supporting our workforce to be diverse, to be well, to be engaged and to develop professionally and personally;
- Ensuring that our working environment is empowering, equitable and inclusive, where diversity of being, of experience and of thought are celebrated and innovation, collaboration and performance thrives;
- Creating a culture of trust, respect and care where employees enjoy coming to work and where they feel they can do their best work to protect and enhance the well-being of people living in Aotearoa New Zealand.

This Statement is a formal, published document that has been endorsed by PHF Science's Executive Leadership Team and signed by the Chief Executive.

Dedicated resources

PHF Science has a dedicated Organisational Development Team responsible for developing and delivering organisational development initiatives across the organisation in the fields of culture and engagement; diversity, equity and inclusion (including cultural capability); leadership development and learning; talent identification and succession planning; career pathways and workforce capability planning; Employee Value Proposition; and the annual Performance Cycle.

Team members are highly skilled and experienced in the design and delivery of organisational development strategies, initiatives and solutions that are fit for purpose and make a difference.

PHF Science has established a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) Commitment Statement and Council that will serve as a catalyst for collaborative decision-making, driving initiatives that will weave DEIB into the fabric of PHF Science's identity. The Council has pledged to continue to foster an environment where every voice is heard, every perspective is valued, and every individual feels a sense of belonging.

They're dedicated to nurturing a workplace that celebrates differences and harnesses power for innovation and collaboration – mahi auaha (pushing boundaries).

The Council's Commitment Statement is:

At PHF Science, we are committed to protecting and enhancing the wellbeing of people living in Aotearoa New Zealand.

This purpose underpins not only our desired strategic outcomes and the science and research we undertake but also how we operate as an organisation.

We know that addressing important science questions for Aotearoa New Zealand requires PHF Science to attract and retain talent people in Aotearoa and from around the world and to create an environment in which everyone can thrive. Key to achieving this is our dedication to creating an inclusive workplace community that respects and values diverse backgrounds and perspectives. We celebrate uniqueness, nurture creativity, and foster collaboration. We wholeheartedly commit to advancing our approach to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEI&B) in our workplace. Our commitment is forward focused and continuously evolving. Together, we make a meaningful impact on our employees and the communities we serve.

This Commitment Statement has been launched to the organisation in both English and te reo Māori.

Data collection and monitoring

As a Crown Research Institute, PHF Science is required to report annually in our [Statement of Corporate Intent](#). One of the current performance measures is to continue to reduce the gender pay gap against the 2022 baseline of 15.6%. Our data capture and reporting is aligned with Statistics New Zealand guidelines to ensure statistical robustness.

[Kia Toipoto](#), the Public Service Gender, Māori, Pacific, and Ethnic Pay Gap Action Plan (2021–2024), officially concluded at the end of 2024 as a dedicated work programme. However, efforts to reduce pay gaps continue under the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) work programme. PHF Science remains committed to the Kia Toipoto focus areas to ensure equity and fairness in the workplace and has a Kia Toipoto Action Plan in place (Appendix I) to achieve these goals and milestones, and measurement against the plan is regularly reported on.

To support the vision of being at the forefront of attaining the lowest burden of crime, environmental contamination and infectious diseases for Aotearoa New Zealand while honouring Te Tiriti, PHF Science aims to be recognised as an exemplar of a thriving people-centred workplace. This means our people are at the heart of our organisation.

To deliver our future state as a leading science organisation that is responsive and agile, we will support our workforce to grow and develop so that PHF Science has flexible capability and capacity to support our communities with the challenges they face now and in the future.

To address complex societal challenges, PHF Science's workforce will be supported to explore new opportunities and be recognised and valued for its diversity of thought and innovation, by removing the barriers that limit engagement, participation and partnership.

We will deliver the right skills and an innovation mindset at the right time, improve pathways for attracting and retaining critical skills and enable greater resource and knowledge sharing across the research, science and innovation system for greater impact.

We will continue to develop a strong people-centred workplace through focusing on diversity, equity and inclusion; improving our leadership confidence and competence; designing and delivering initiatives to support improved engagement and empowerment; identifying and celebrating our

employee's unique strengths to build strong and cohesive teams; and continuing our focus on health, safety and wellbeing that delivers to changing individual and organisational circumstances and needs.

We will also continue to refine and shape PHF Science's cultural capability and competency to ensure PHF Science is an accountable, safe and responsive organisation. Our aspiration is to have a workforce that is representative of the Aotearoa New Zealand working population (with a particular focus on increasing the proportion of Māori employees in our workforce, along with Pacific peoples and other under-represented ethnicities) and a workplace that is engaging, empowering and provides meaningful challenge and opportunities to grow and develop. We will continue to develop a strong people-centred workplace through focusing on diversity, equity and inclusion.

Training

To support our Kia Toipoto goals we have remuneration and HR systems, policies and practices in place that are designed to remove all forms of bias and discrimination and we are continually reviewing and updating these.

We have self-paced Unconscious Bias training available as a learning requirement for all people leaders and is available for all employees, we have established safe frameworks for discussion, and we are actively nurturing an environment conducive to candid dialogue on biases devoid of fear or repercussions.

We provide guidance to recruiting managers on gender and equity considerations and are planning to provide training on preventing bias in the recruitment process. We undertake regular analysis and reporting of starting salaries to provide evidence to direct or support ongoing initiatives for gender equity.

Our DEIB Council members have undertaken relevant training to support them in their work. The Council will work on the priorities / initiatives to create an inclusive workplace community that respects and values diverse backgrounds and perspectives.

Work-life balance and organisational culture

To support work-life balance for our people, PHF Science fosters an environment that is flexible which means treating all roles as suitable for flexible working and exploring how flexibility could work for PHF Science, the team, our customers and the employee. We have Flexible Working Guidance that outline the range of options for flexible working including working part time, working remotely, flexible hours and/or days, flexible leave arrangements, job sharing, working compressed weeks or fortnights, phased return to work or phased retirement as well as informal arrangements including earlier or later start and finish times or blending between work and home life when working remotely.

Flexible working is equally available regardless of gender, ethnicity, disability and other dimensions of diversity and irrespective of the reason for wanting it. Working flexibly does not undermine career progression or pay.

Employees of PHF Science are entitled to parental leave in accordance with the provision of the Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987 and its amendments. In addition, PHF Science offers:

- A one-off gross payment of \$500.00 per child paid in the pay period prior to the employee commencing parental leave

- Five days paid leave for employees eligible for partner leave (in substitution for 5 of the 10 unpaid days provided by legislation) to support the employee during this time
- Continued salary increases in line with the Remuneration Framework while on Parental Leave or Extended Leave
- Continual accrual of annual leave during parental leave at the applicable salary rate
- A parental leave grant that can either be paid as a lump sum at the beginning or end of the parental leave period or as full salary for the first six weeks of parental leave.

Gender balance in leadership and decision-making

PHF Science has strong female representation, with approximately two-thirds of the overall workforce identifying as female.

Science and non-science roles at PHF Science are predominantly filled by females. The science domain comprises 67% females and 33% males (as of 1 January 2025).

Māori and Pacific representation continues to be low, while Asian representation is the second largest ethnic group within the organisation.

As of 31 July 2025, women hold 54% of all leadership positions at PHF Science. We remain committed to increasing representation of under-represented groups – including Māori, Pacific, Latin American, and African communities – across all levels of the organisation.

PHF Science is focused on developing career pathways and equitable progression opportunities that support women, Māori, Pacific and ethnic employees to achieve their career aspirations and to improve gender and ethnic representation in leadership. We have actively participated in Women in Leadership training and support programmes that encourage and develop minorities.

Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

Our employment brand, recruitment process and talent pipeline are designed to attract a diverse range of people joining and being successful at PHF Science. We recruit people based on merit from a diverse pool of talented candidates that represents the diversity of our community and where a talent pipeline does not exist, we take action to support the creation of one. All vacancies are advertised internally and that there is a consistent, impartial, and transparent process focused on minimising barriers or biases to selecting the best candidate.

PHF Science has an Early Career Group. The group's main purpose is to develop a community for those near the beginning of their careers, so they can share ideas, expertise, provide career support, discuss relevant issues, create opportunities for professional and personal development, career progression and networking within PHF Science. Early career is not defined by factors such as age, level of educational training or work experience, and encompasses anyone who identifies themselves as early career.

PHF Science also has a promotions process that acts an opportunity to recognise our employees who have made positive developments in their career. An employee who is promoted is seen to have demonstrated sustained capability, performance and behaviour in line with the responsibilities associated with the higher level they are being promoted to. The promotions process runs each year and applications are encouraged from employees that have been in their role for one year or more.

All applications are reviewed by a panel selected based on site representation, gender balance and personal attributes such as autonomy, fairness and respect of fellow employees. Analysis over a number of years shows that promotion applications received by gender are closely aligned with the gender split of the organisation.

Year	Applications Submitted					Applications Approved						
	Total Applications	Number of Applications		% of Total Applications		Total Applications Approved	Number of Applications Approved		% of Total Applications Approved		% of Female Applications Approved	% of Male Applications Approved
		Female	Male	Female	Male		Female	Male	Female	Male		
2010	15	10	5	67%	33%	12	9	3	75%	25%	90%	60%
2011	17	13	4	76%	24%	13	11	2	85%	15%	85%	50%
2012	14	6	8	43%	57%	5	3	2	60%	40%	50%	25%
2013	14	9	5	64%	36%	9	6	3	67%	33%	67%	60%
2014	13	7	6	54%	46%	7	5	2	71%	29%	71%	33%
2015	19	11	8	58%	42%	12	7	5	58%	42%	64%	63%
2016	14	8	6	57%	43%	9	5	4	56%	44%	63%	67%
2017	29	23	6	79%	21%	19	17	2	89%	11%	74%	33%
2018	17	9	8	53%	47%	6	3	3	50%	50%	33%	38%
2019	13	7	6	54%	46%	11	6	5	55%	45%	86%	83%
2020	13	8	5	62%	38%	12	7	5	58%	42%	88%	100%
2021	16	12	4	75%	25%	13	9	4	69%	31%	75%	100%
2022	6	3	3	50%	50%	5	3	2	60%	40%	100%	67%
2023	26	17	9	65%	35%	16	9	7	56%	44%	53%	78%
2024	43	28	15	65%	35%	38	23	15	61%	39%	82%	100%

In 2023 PHF Science implemented a new fair and transparent remuneration framework that is aligned with the market to ensure it can attract and retain motivated and competent employees. Progression within the framework is outlined in employment agreements and salary bands are adjusted annually.

PHF Science is an accredited Living Wage Employer. This means we have committed to paying no less than the Living Wage to all employees and those contracted workers delivering services to our sites on a regular and ongoing basis.

Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content

PHF Science uses world-leading science to provide national surveillance of infectious disease, support food safety investigations, safeguard our water, and through our forensic science services support the justice sector, to protect the health, wellbeing and safety of New Zealand communities. Where gender is an integral part of the data collected or part of research undertaken, PHF Science will monitor and report on it. For example, PHF Science collects and analyses national data for notifiable infectious diseases and reports on age, gender and ethnicity.

Measures against gender-based violence, including sexual harassment

As a public sector organisation our responsibility to maintain the highest standards of integrity, discretion and ethical conduct in order to maintain and enhance the public's trust and confidence in PHF Science is outlined on our Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct outlines the behaviour that is expected of everyone at PHF Science including employees, contractors, directors and students. Managers can use the Code to recognise positive behaviours or address behaviours that appear inconsistent with it. It is expected that PHF Science People Leaders are exemplary models of the Code of Conduct.

In addition to and supporting the Code of Conduct, PHF Science has a range of policies including:

- People Policy
- Respectful Workplace Policy
- Protected Disclosures Policy

Employees affected by domestic violence are entitled to take up to 10 days of paid family violence leave for each 12-month period. These employees can also ask for flexible working arrangements for up to 2 months.

PHF Science has guidelines in place to support those impacted by family violence so they have a safe place to work and find a way to be safe outside of work. We offer help in several ways including:

- Trained PHF Science employees
- Paid domestic violence leave
- Short-term flexible work arrangements
- A workplace safety plan
- Contacts and resources to get help.

The rollout of an enterprise-wide critical risk programme (CRP) has further facilitated PHF Science's identification and management of gender-based violence, harassment, and equity concerns.

Implementation of the psychosocial and violence & aggression branches of the CRP, has enabled PHF Science to identify psychological, social, and physical violence risks, which may be associated with gender equity hazards more broadly. To eliminate these risks (where reasonably practicable), PHF Science has identified various critical controls, some of which include:

- Scheduled 1:1 manager check-ins
- Regular psychologist debriefings for high hazard teams
- Mental-health first-aiders
- A psychosocial event reporting mechanism.

Additionally, PHF Science's critical risk management framework (CRM) allows risk owners to seek assurance regarding the efficacy of the CRP in controlling risks associated with gender-based violence.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'ABL', followed by a long horizontal line.

Dr Ashley Bloomfield

Chief Executive
PHF Science

