

MANAGED ISOLATION AND QUARANTINE FACILITIES

WORKERS SURVEY 2020

Canterbury

District Health Board

Te Poari Hauora o Waitaha

In late 2020, the Canterbury Regional Isolation and Quarantine leadership team commissioned a survey of staff working at Managed Isolation and Quarantine Facilities (MIQFs).

It followed reports of incidents of stigma and discrimination experienced by the workers and considered the nature of working in this high-stress, high-public profile environment.

The online survey was carried out by the Information Team from Community and Public Health (a division of the Canterbury DHB). The views and experiences of 356 MIQF workers were obtained using an opt-in sampling methodology.¹

The full report is available at cdhb.health.nz

¹The views presented do not necessarily reflect the views and experiences of all MIQF workers in Canterbury. The estimated response rate to the survey was 44 percent. Some questions were not answered by all respondents.

53% felt valued as an employee by management of the MIQFs

65% felt valued by the guests who stayed in the MIQFs

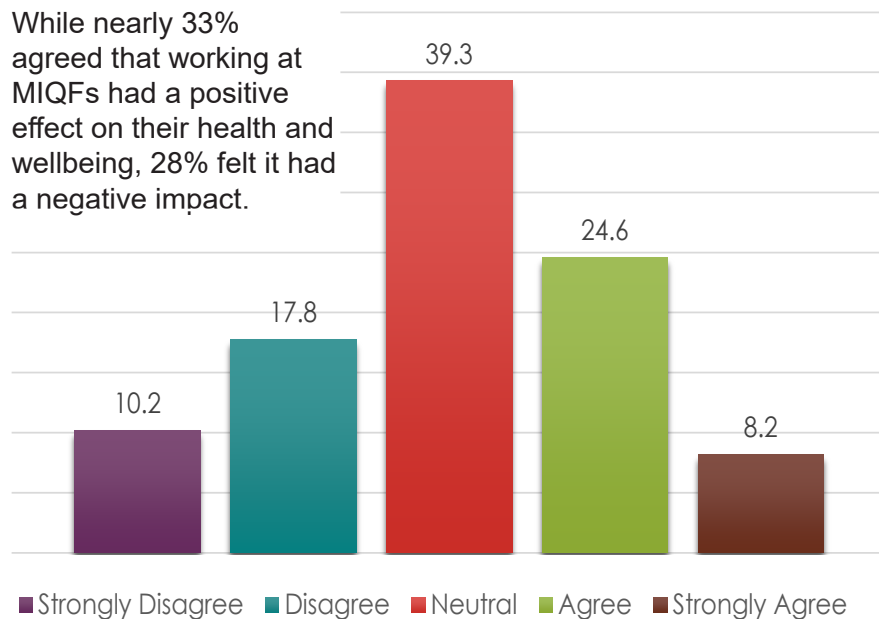
Only **26%** felt valued by wider community for their work in MIQFs

The survey found that the majority of workers were proud of their contribution to the country's COVID response.

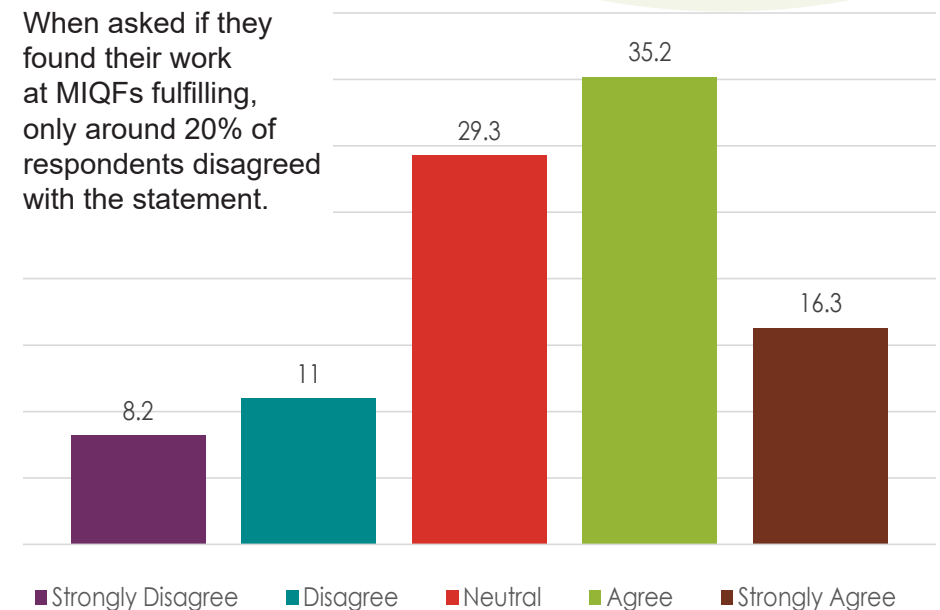
Workers felt well supported and valued by guests and management.

A small number felt they had been treated more positively because of their role in MIQFs.

While nearly 33% agreed that working at MIQFs had a positive effect on their health and wellbeing, 28% felt it had a negative impact.



When asked if they found their work at MIQFs fulfilling, only around 20% of respondents disagreed with the statement.



However a large number of respondents reported unfair treatment, stigma and discrimination because of their work with MIQFs.

A number also reported that discrimination flowing through to their family or whānau.

More than half of respondents reported being treated unfairly due to their place of work, including:

- When accessing health services like the dentist or hospital appointments
- In social events
- In making or keeping friends
- By family members
- In finding or keeping a job, including secondary employment
- By people in the neighbourhood

Respondents described restricting activities, including:

- Not visiting the elderly or other vulnerable groups
- Not socialising with family and friends
- Not participating in sports
- Not attending the gym, clubs, church or the movies
- Avoiding large gatherings

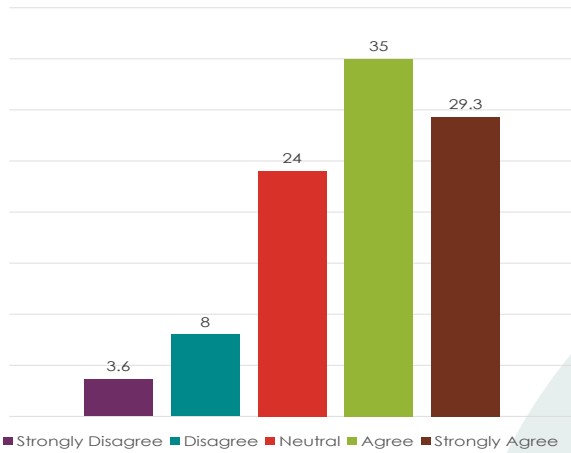
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I cannot access my GP, I feel like people think we have the plague.

I needed to cancel my daughter's birthday party because people didn't want to come because I work in MIQF.

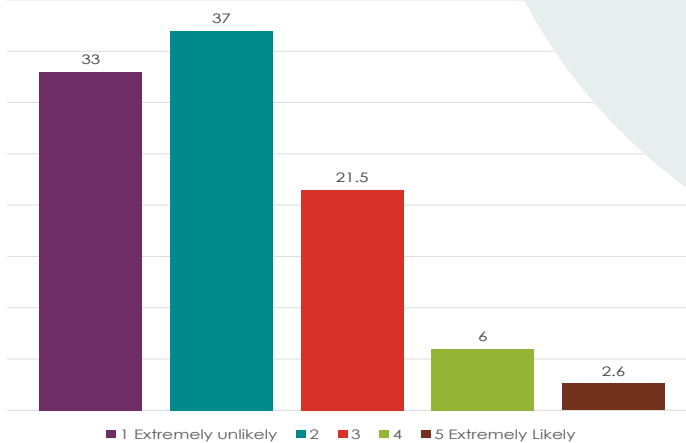
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[I was] asked not to attend dentist while working in MIQF.



67% were concerned about the potentially negative effects of media coverage if they did catch COVID while at work.

Most respondents saw the perceived risk of becoming infected while at work as unlikely.



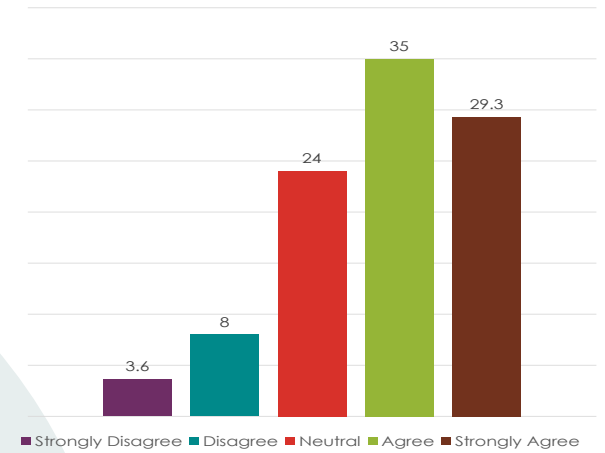
Many respondents voiced concern about the lack of understanding from the public about what happens at MIQFs, and were worried about the continued negative media coverage.

A majority (70%) expressed concern about public scrutiny if they contracted COVID while working in MIQFs – although most considered it unlikely to occur. Some 64% were confident they'd be well supported by staff and management if they did become infected.

“

I want to be proud of my job... I feel that I have to hide my position from so many people, businesses and other facilities in the community for fear of being rejected simply because of where I work.

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Most respondents indicated they were confident of being well supported by staff and management of MIQFs if they were to become infected.

“

When people find out I work in a managed isolation facility, their whole behaviour changes and they can't get away quick enough.

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THE WORK AHEAD

- Change media attitudes
- Improve public understanding
- Work to ensure barrier-free access to healthcare services
- Ongoing support for MIQF workers