

## Empowerment Award Entrant: Key Assets



Part-time work, flexible start and finish times, a time back system and family-friendly leave policies are all ways child services provider Key Assets supports its largely female staff.

Key Assets is a not-for-profit foster care agency providing family placements for children and young people. The organisation operates from its office in Manukau to support carers in the North Island from Tai Tokerau to Tauranga and also has a home based Social Worker in Christchurch.

Key Assets' workforce is largely female which is common in the childcare sector. As such it needs to ensure it is fully supportive of its employees and has an understanding of any additional support needs that may be required to ensure employees feel supported and able to work to 100 per cent of their capacity.

To do that Key Assets offers flexible working conditions including part time opportunities and, in some locations, the ability to work from home. Due to the nature of the work supporting foster carers, working hours can vary outside the standard working hours and so employees are able to be flexible in their start and finish times in the office to accommodate home visits to carers. For work over and above base hours Key Assets operate a time back system. This system enables employees to take back the extra hours worked at a convenient time.

Key Assets has family-friendly leave policies in place and also regularly benchmarks salaries compared to the sector and ensures there are no pay gaps based on gender.

Non-discriminatory recruitment processes are followed and all candidates are assessed fairly and equitably based on their skills and experience by a recruitment panel. Standard non-gender biased interview questions are used for each role and generic person specifications are used to shortlist candidates for roles. Each recruitment panel is headed by a member of the leadership team with guidance from Human Resources.

Key Assets believes that by supporting women in such ways and by also empowering women at all levels of the organisation, it has been able to develop a workforce of passionate, engaged employees who are all able to focus on making a positive and lasting difference for children and families.

That is backed by employee wellbeing analysis, where 91 per cent of employees said they were able to re-craft their job to suit their need, felt respected at work and has positive transactions with their manager.

To have a largely female workforce who know they can re-craft their job to suit their needs is a huge step in terms of demonstrating workplace flexibility.

Eighty three percent of employees are satisfied with their work, content with how they are treated, don't think negatively about Key Assets and believe that Key Assets care about their wellbeing

"Our employees know that they will be supported by their manager and leadership team as quite often they have walked in the same footsteps before them," says HR Manager Leanne Mills.

"Time and again we hear that people want to come and work for Key Assets because of our positive culture and inclusivity of all people. Not only are we attracting increasing numbers of qualified candidates for advertised roles we are seeing increased interest from people wanting to work with us in the future."

Key Assets' staff turnover has decreased and its current workforce is stable. The last time it recruited a Social Worker due to turnover was in 2014, with new roles being recruited for due to growth more recently.

Key Assets also believes it is also important that the structure of its board reflects its workforce. As such, three of the four members are female. And the organisation's management/leadership team is all female.