

What can **businesses** do to help?



Social Cohesion Guide for Businesses

Belonging in business

Businesses help to build social cohesion, help people feel like they belong, feel included, be themselves and take part in society. Businesses create an inclusive work culture through employment practices. They enable people to participate more fully in their communities and societies by paying an income to their staff and relieving the financial pressure to “make ends meet”. Evidence shows that diversity and inclusivity have economic benefits such as increased innovation in the workplace.

We’re all different but we want to get along, celebrate our diversity and respect others when we disagree. This is important because not everybody feels that they can be who they are or trusts that their voice will be heard.

We are an increasingly diverse country with our businesses serving many different communities. We need to find ways to listen to each other and hear each other. We want to commit to understanding our differences and strengths and to work on what unifies us and what brings us closer.

Belonging What it looks like

In a society where people get along well, we: know each other, know our neighbours, feel included in our workplaces, and know where to go to get help when we need it.

We feel that we are able to talk to people we might not normally talk to, speak up when we hear people saying discriminatory things, and feel free to share who we are, where we are from, and how we do things. In a crisis we leave no one behind; everyone is included.

Building more belonging

What you can do

So, what can we do in our communities to help more people belong, embrace diversity, feel connected, take part, trust others, feel respected?

Belonging, trusting others

- Consider how to make jobs more accessible to diverse groups
 - advertise jobs through community networks, organisations, radio stations, podcasts, social media platforms, a diverse range of media, newspapers and television channels for specific audiences.
- Consider accessibility of services and goods provided
 - if your business is conducted online, is it accessible to the visually impaired? If your business has a public-facing shop or office, is it accessible to people with mobility impairments?

Embracing diversity, feeling respected

- Value workforce diversity and create initiatives to support diversity
 - recognise celebrations and events that are significant to staff, encourage them to bring their whole selves to work, and provide opportunities for them to input into service and goods design.
- Support workers to get to know each other (whakawhānaungatanga)
 - set time aside in the day or week to come together as a team or as colleagues to get to know each other. This could be a morning or afternoon tea, or part of a business away-day.
- Promote best practice through an annual business excellence awards, where diverse contributions are valued, and inclusive workplaces are celebrated.

Feeling connected

- Seek out and promote dialogue with communities that may share different views to grow understanding.
- Use focus groups to test new products and services and seek focus groups from different and intersecting communities.

Taking part

- Facilitate further engagement with employee networks and unions.
- Ensure that all workers know their rights
 - provide information on employment rights in induction handbooks, internal staff forums and intranets.
- Support workers to engage in cultural, community, civic and family events
 - encourage or celebrate cultural, community or civic engagements in the office. This could be in the form of morning or afternoon tea events.
 - encourage staff to take time off to attend family events and cultural or community celebrations.
- Promote employment of migrants in businesses – assisting with the preparation of CV writing, interview skills, NZ work experience and meaningful employment with follow-up mentoring.
- Promote employment of young people in businesses – assisting with the preparation of CV writing, interview skills, relevant training, access to gaining a driver's license and meaningful employment with follow-up mentoring.
- Promote employment of disabled people in businesses – assisting with the preparation of CV writing, interview skills, and meaningful employment, with follow-up mentoring.
- Implement a programme like Chamber Drive – which supports 5000 individuals to get their driver's license. Someone with a driver's license is seven-times more likely to find employment.
- Implement business mentor programmes to support the growing number of people wanting to start up their own businesses.

- Provide low-cost or no-cost promotional platforms for business owners to promote job opportunities among other business communities and their social media networks.
- Offer in-person, online and accessible events and activities for businesses to engage and network with each other and their communities.

