

Attitudes and factors behind paid work decisions

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Introduction

We asked respondents to the 2022 New Zealand Income Support Survey about attitudes and factors behind paid work decisions, including questions about:

- attitudes to the usefulness of income support for families with children
- non-financial and financial factors behind making paid work decisions.

The survey included people aged 18 to 64 on incomes that could potentially qualify them for income support payments such as the Accommodation Supplement and Working for Families (WFF) and excluded full-time students.

1,852 people from across the country responded to the survey between June and December 2022.

Approach to reporting results

Weighting

Results are weighted to be representative of the New Zealand population of working-age people on low- and middle-incomes.

Reporting of results

Some results are marked with a hash (#). Results with a hash should be reported with additional context in text (for example: "52 (\pm 15) percent respondents said..."). This is because these results have high margins of error and/or high relative sampling errors, and so should be used with care.

For more information about how this is determined, please read the methodology report. For confidence intervals, see the supporting excel tables.

Sub-group comparisons

Sub-group level comparisons are only reported when there are at least 300 respondents included in the total analysis and there are enough sub-groups where it is viable to produce the comparison. Two forms of sub-group comparison are commented on:

- comparison to the overall survey result (for example, comparing the result for respondents aged 18 to 24 against the overall survey result)
- comparison with other sub-groups in the same breakdown (for example, comparing the result for respondents aged 18 to 24 to the results for other age groups).

Differences that are statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level using confidence intervals are commented on.

Differences compared to other sub-groups in the same breakdown are generally only commented on if they have not already been mentioned in comparison with the survey average.

On occasion, differences that are not statistically significant using confidence intervals but display interesting trends that may be of interest to readers are commented on.

Rounding of percentages and weighted figures

Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100 percent, and weighted figures may not add up to weighted totals.

Aggregation and suppression of sub-groups and categories

Where sub-group and/or category counts are small and/or have large confidence intervals and/or relative sampling errors, these are sometimes aggregated together, or suppressed and not displayed in graphs.

Reporting of ethnicity

A respondent can identify with more than one ethnicity. This results in totals for ethnic breakdowns adding up to more than 100 percent of respondents. Statistical testing for differences between ethnic sub-groups compares those in a selected ethnic group with those not in the group (including respondents who did not provide an ethnicity).

Reporting of gender

Respondents were asked about their gender, with the possible responses being male, female, another gender, don't know, or prefer not to say. In the reporting of results, we only report gender sub-group results for respondents who identified as male or female due to the small number of respondents who responded otherwise. This is to protect confidentiality.

Treatment of verbatim responses

For some questions, respondents were able to provide verbatim answers. Where appropriate, these have been recoded into existing categories, or into new categories.

Coding of scale responses

For presentation of survey responses where respondents were asked to rate the importance of non-financial or financial factors from 1 to 5, these are coded as the following:

- 1 or 2: Not at all important or slightly important
- 3: Moderately important
- 4 or 5: Important or extremely important

Survey routing issues that impact this analysis

Some respondents who should have been asked questions in the in-work tax credit section of the survey were not asked some questions due to a survey routing error. Additionally, 15 respondents were not asked paid work questions due to an unrelated issue. Further information is included within our methodology report.

Attitudes to the usefulness of income support for respondents with children who met the income threshold for the in-work tax credit and were receiving income support payments for families with children

What did we ask respondents?

Throughout the survey, we asked respondents about whether they were receiving the following payments:

- the family tax credit
- the minimum family tax credit
- the in-work tax credit
- Best Start
- Childcare Subsidy or OSCAR Subsidy
- the Child Disability Allowance.

Respondents who said they were receiving any of those payments were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the following statements:

- Income support payments available through Work and Income and Inland Revenue for families with children (these payments) make working worthwhile for me (and my partner)
- Income support payments available through Work and Income and Inland Revenue for families with children (these payments) help me meet my family's needs.

Note: 110 respondents who should have been asked these questions were not asked these questions due to a routing issue within the survey. Further information is included within our methodology report.

Just half the respondents with children asked said that they agreed that income support payments for families with children helped make working worthwhile for them

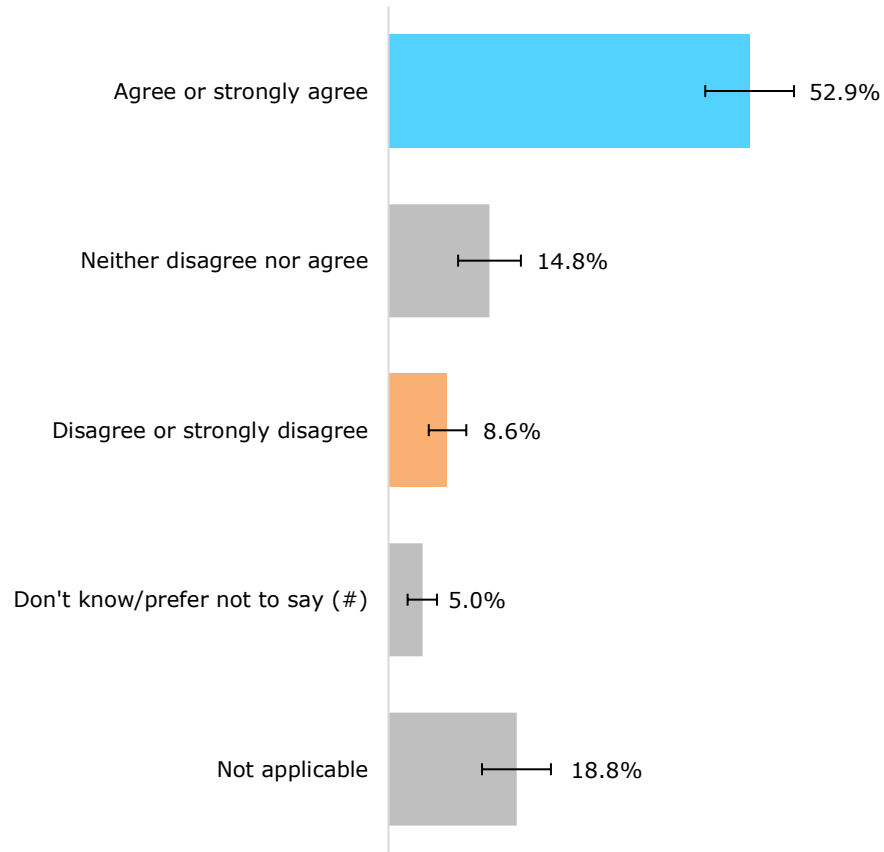
52.9 percent of respondents with children who were asked **agreed or strongly agreed** with the statement “These payments make working worthwhile for me (and my partner)”.

14.8 percent neither agreed nor disagreed.

8.6 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

5.0 (± 2.2) percent didn’t know or preferred not to say.

18.8 percent thought the statement was not applicable to their circumstances.

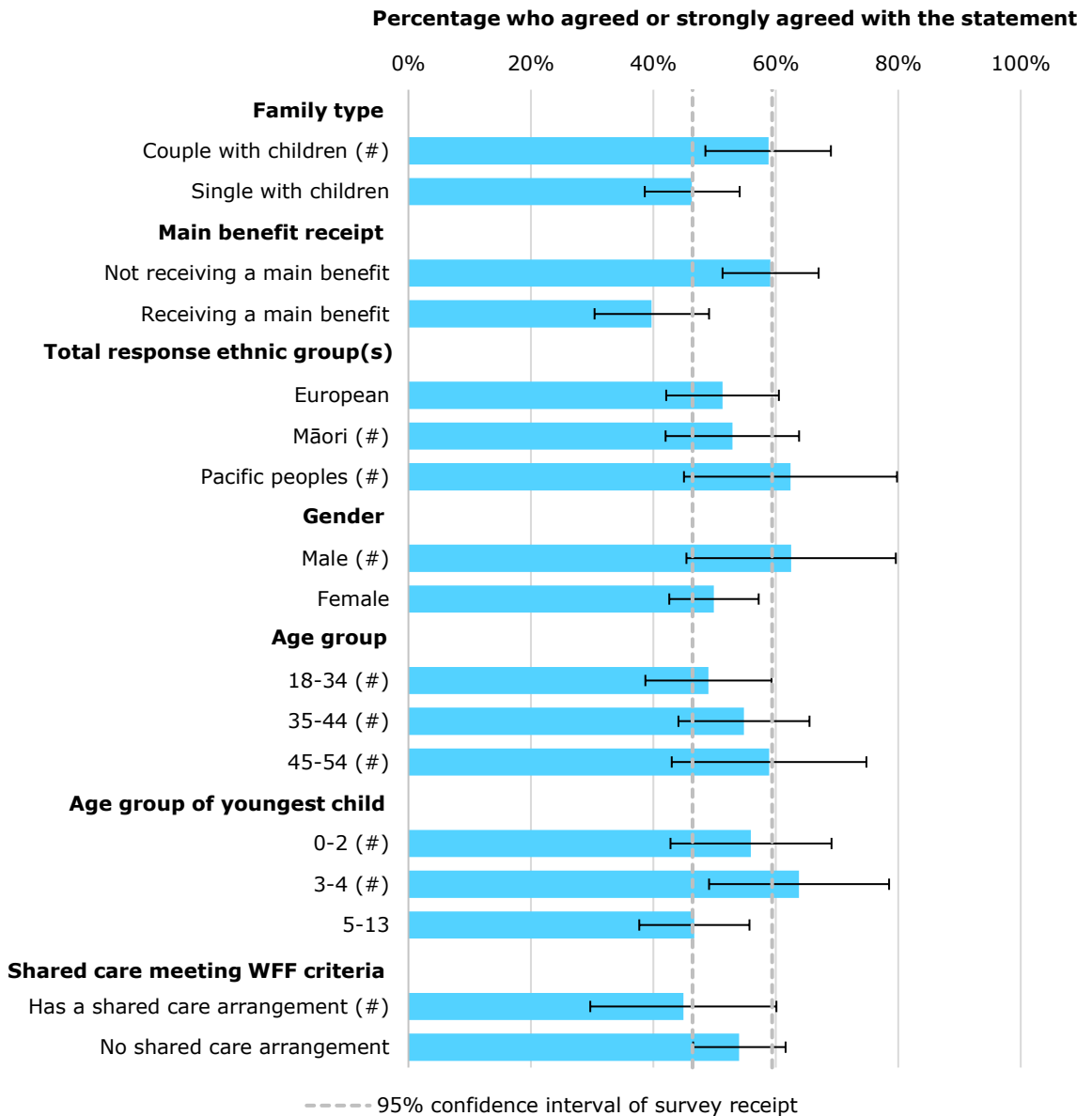


Note: Total respondents = 561, total weighted respondents = 250,527

There was one statistically significant difference at the sub-group level in the proportion of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that income support payments for families with children helped make working worthwhile for them

Comparing within sub-group breakdowns, respondents who were not receiving a main benefit were statistically significantly **more likely** to agree with the statement “These payments make working worthwhile for me (and my partner)” compared to respondents who were receiving a main benefit.

While not statistically significant, respondents who had a youngest child aged three to four years old appeared slightly more likely to agree with the statement.



Over two-thirds of respondents with children said they agreed that income support payments for families with children helped them meet their family's needs

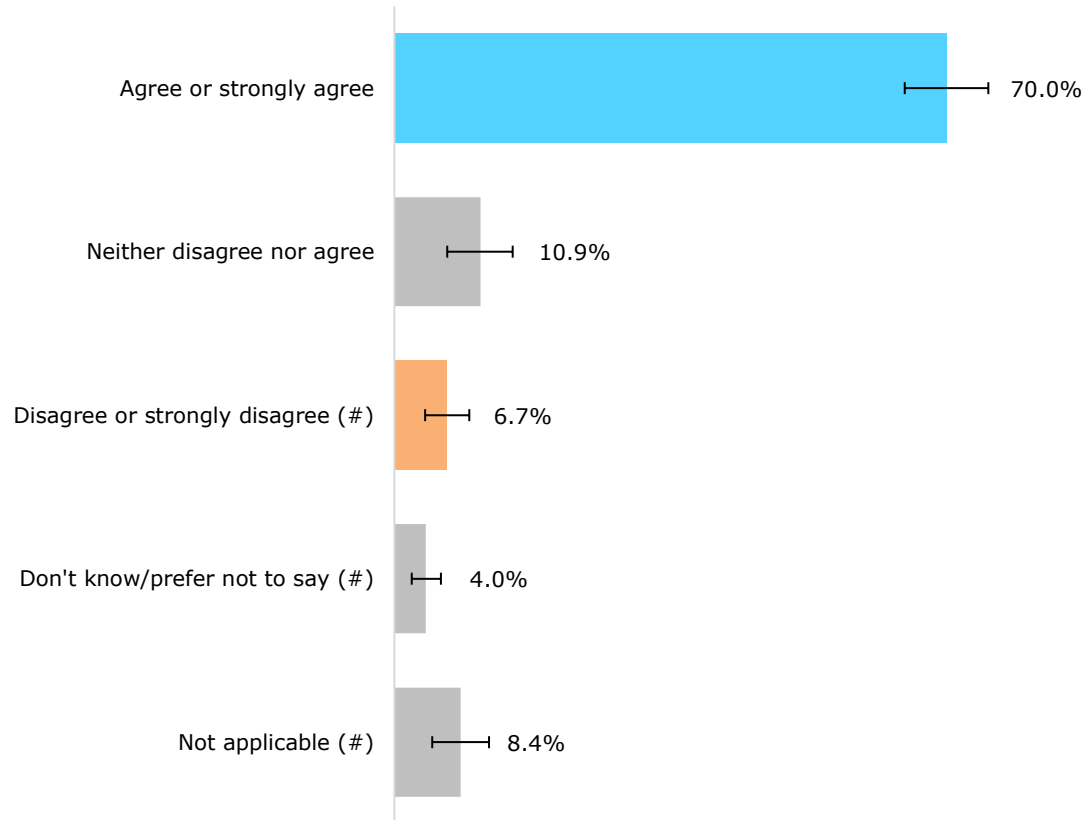
70 percent of respondents with children who were asked **agreed or strongly agreed** with the statement "These payments help me meet my family's needs".

10.9 percent neither agreed nor disagreed.

6.7 (± 2.8) percent disagreed or strongly disagreed.

4.0 (± 1.9) percent didn't know or preferred not to say.

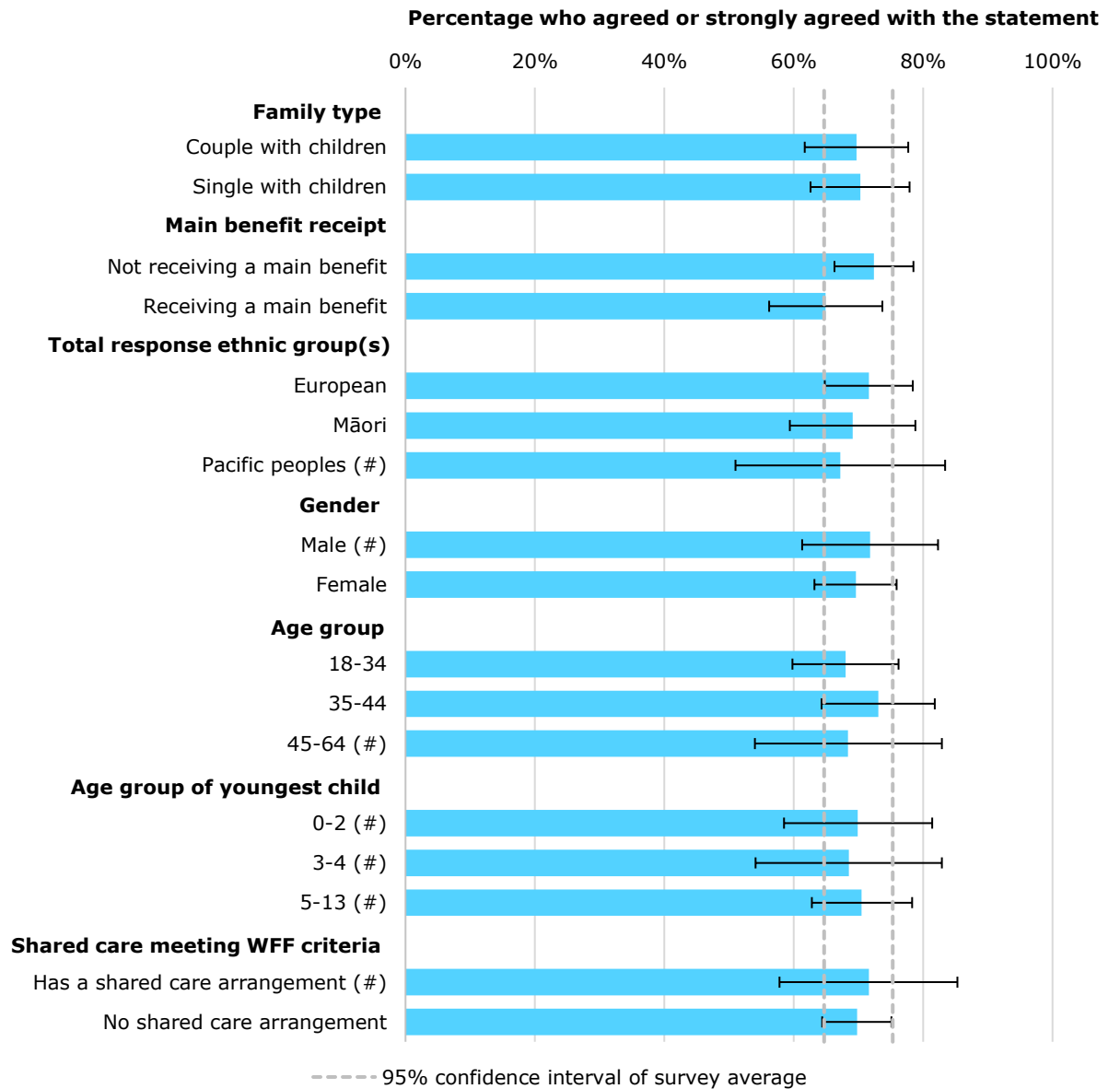
8.4 (± 3.6) percent thought the statement was not applicable to their circumstances.



Note: Total respondents = 561, total weighted respondents = 250,527

There were no statistically significant differences at the sub-group level in the proportion of respondents that agreed or strongly agreed that income support payments for families with children helped them meet their family's needs

While there were some variations in the proportion of respondents that agreed or strongly agreed that income support payments for families with children helped them meet their family's needs at the sub-group level, none of these variations reached the threshold to be classified as statistically significant using confidence intervals.



Factors behind making paid work decisions for respondents with children

What did we ask respondents?

Respondents were asked the following questions:

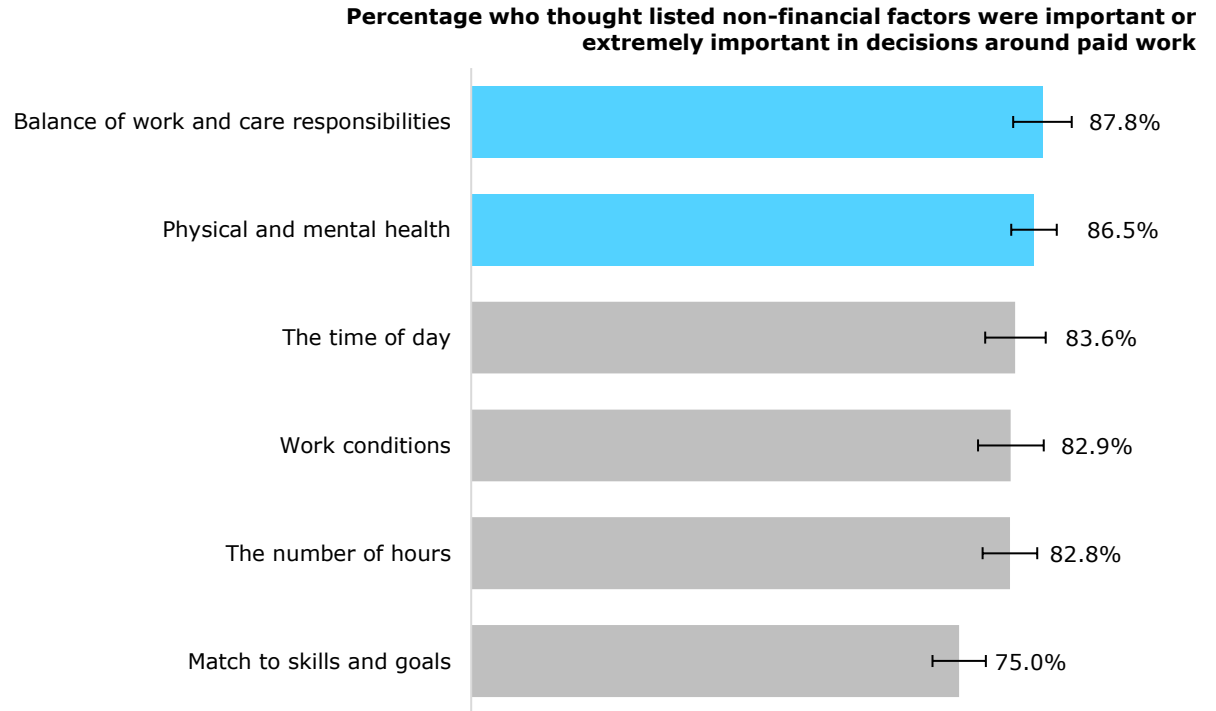
- Rank the following non-financial factors in relation to paid decisions about paid work on a scale of 1 (not at all important) to 5 (extremely important): the time of day you are required to work, the number of hours you are required to work, whether the employer provides good work conditions, how well the job matches your skills and goals, your physical or mental health allowing you to work, balancing work with any care responsibilities.
- Thinking about your (and your partner's) income. As far as you know, if you were to earn an additional \$100 per week from a job, what would this do to your total income? Taking into account any benefit reductions or tax, overall would you be better off, worse off or about the same?
- Rank the following financial factors in relation to decisions about paid work on a scale of 1 (not at all important) to 5 (extremely important): tax to pay, receiving reduced Working for Families payments, receiving any reduced benefit payments, child support payments, student loan repayments, whether you will end up with more money after costs such as transport, petrol, parking, and childcare are taken into account.
- Are there any other things financially (up to five) that would be important in your decision? (to earn an extra \$100 per week from a job).

Note: 14 respondents were not asked these questions, either due to a survey routing issue, or because they were not answering on behalf of themselves (as only respondents who were answering on behalf of themselves were asked these questions). Further information is available in our methodology report.

A variety of non-financial factors were important or extremely important to respondents with children in decisions around paid work

Respondents with children generally said the non-financial factors that we asked about were either important or extremely important in decisions around paid work.

Achieving a **balance of work and care responsibilities**, and respondents' **physical and mental health allowing them to work** were the two factors most commonly rated as important or extremely important by respondents with children.



Note: Total respondents = 1,004, total weighted respondents = 470,268.

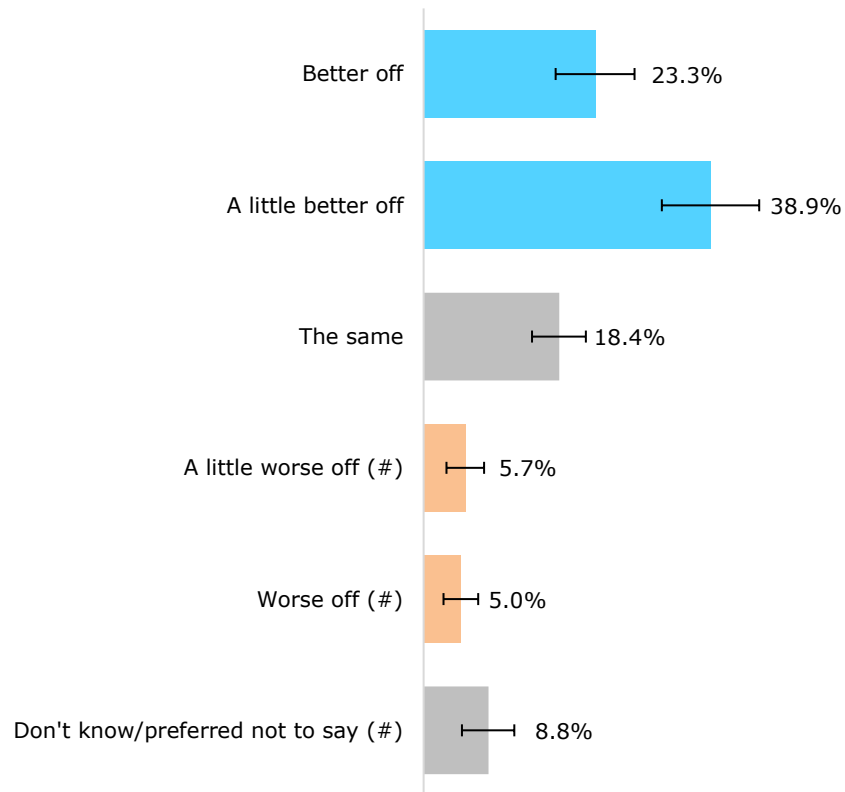
Just over 62 percent of respondents with children said that they would be either a little better off, or better off financially if they were to earn an additional \$100 per week from a job

23.3 percent of respondents with children said they would be **better off** financially if they were to earn an additional \$100 per week from a job.

38.9 percent said they would be **a little better off**.

In total, **62.2 percent** of respondents with children said they would be **better off to some degree**.

5.7 (± 2.6) percent said they would be **a little worse off**, and **5.0 (± 2.4) percent** said they would be **worse off**.

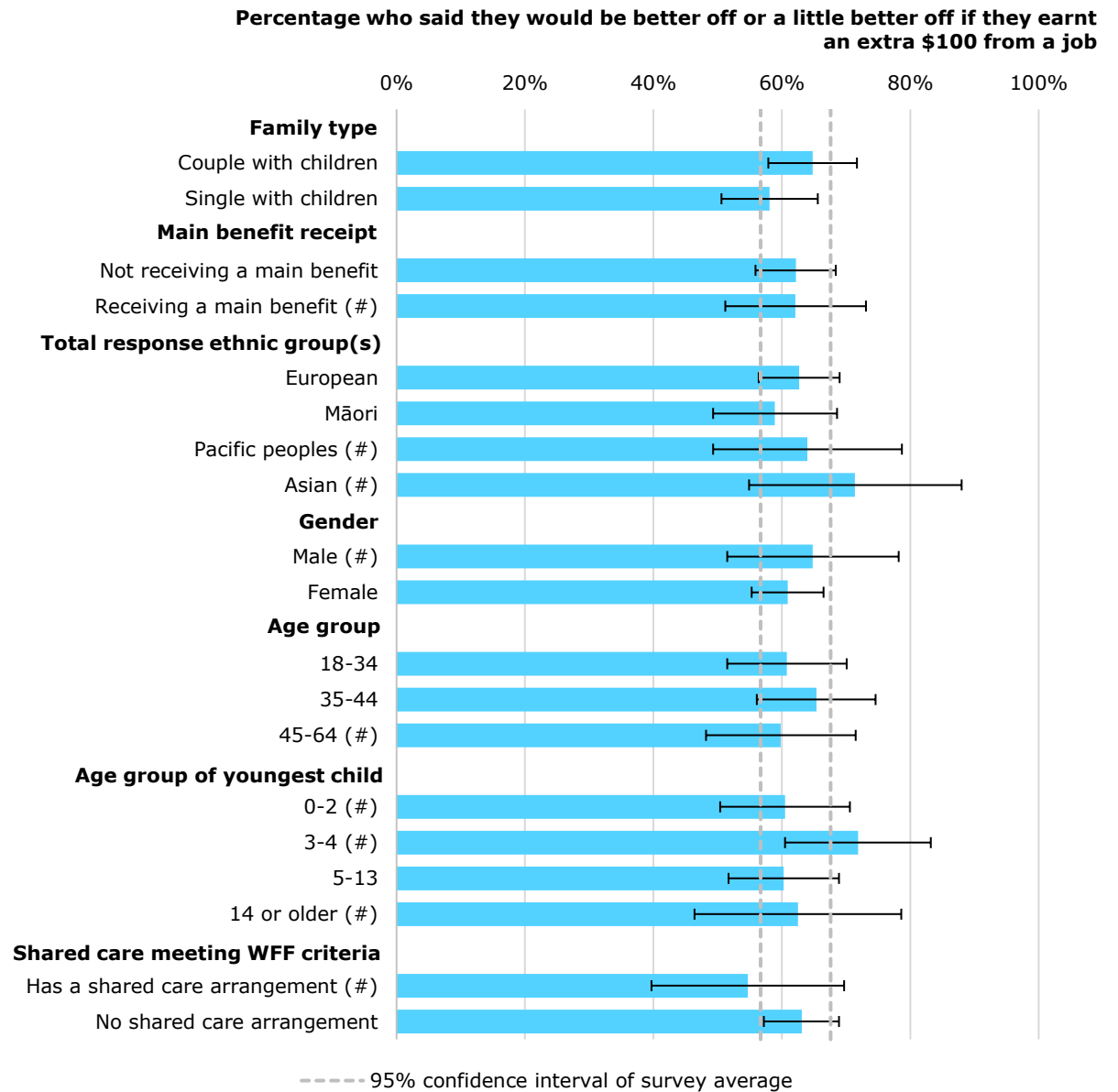


Note: Total respondents = 1,004, total weighted respondents = 470,269.

There were no statistically significant differences at the sub-group level in the proportion of respondents with children who said they would be financially better off or a little better off if they earned an extra \$100 from a job

The proportion of respondents with children who said they would be financially better off or a little better off if they earned an extra \$100 from a job ranged between 54 and 72 percent depending on sub-group.

While no statistically significant differences were found, respondents who had a youngest child aged three or four years old seemed slightly more likely to say they would be financially better off or a little better off.

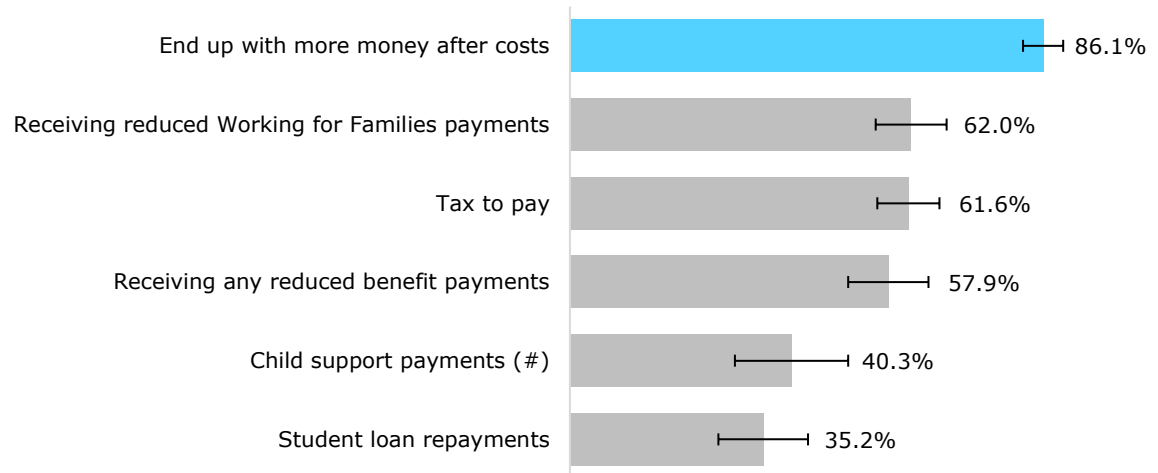


Just over 86 percent of respondents with children said that ending up with more money after costs was an important or extremely important financial factor when deciding if they would take an opportunity to earn an extra \$100 per week from a job

Ending up with more money after costs was rated as an important or extremely important financial factor for **86.1 percent** of respondents with children when deciding if they would take an opportunity to earn an extra \$100 per week from a job.

Receiving reduced Working for Families payments (62 percent), tax to pay on earnings (61.6 percent), and receiving any reduced benefit payments (57.9 percent) were also commonly ranked as important or extremely important financial factors.

Percentage who thought listed financial factors were important or extremely important in deciding to take an opportunity to earn an extra \$100 per week from a job



Note 1: Total respondents = 1,004, total weighted respondents = 470,268.

Note 2: Percentages exclude "not applicable" responses.

Respondents were given an opportunity to provide up to five other responses regarding financial factors that would be important when deciding if they would take an opportunity to earn an extra \$100 per week from a job.

Common factors provided by respondents who provided other responses included:

- having more money for other expenses
- needing to factor in time for travel
- whether any additional hours worked would increase other expenses.

Factors behind making paid work decisions for respondents without children

What did we ask respondents?

Respondents were asked the following questions:

- Rank the following non-financial factors in relation to decisions about paid work on a scale of 1 (not at all important) to 5 (extremely important): the time of day you were required to work, the number of hours you are required to work, whether the employer provides good work conditions, how well the job matches your skills and goals, your physical or mental health allowing you to work, balancing work with any care responsibilities.
- Thinking about your (and your partner's) income. As far as you know, if you were to earn an additional \$100 per week from a job, what would this do to your total income? Taking into account any benefit reductions or tax, overall would you be better off, worse off or about the same?
- Rank the following financial factors in relation to paid decisions about paid work on a scale of 1 (not at all important) to 5 (extremely important): tax to pay, receiving reduced Working for Families payments, receiving any reduced benefit payments, child support payments, student loan repayments, whether you will end up with more money after costs such as transport, petrol, parking, and childcare are taken into account.
- Are there any other things financially (up to five) that would be important in your decision? (to earn an extra \$100 per week from a job).

Note: 24 respondents were not asked these questions, either due to a survey routing issue, or because they were not answering on behalf of themselves (as only respondents who were answering on behalf of themselves were asked these questions). Further information is available in our methodology report.

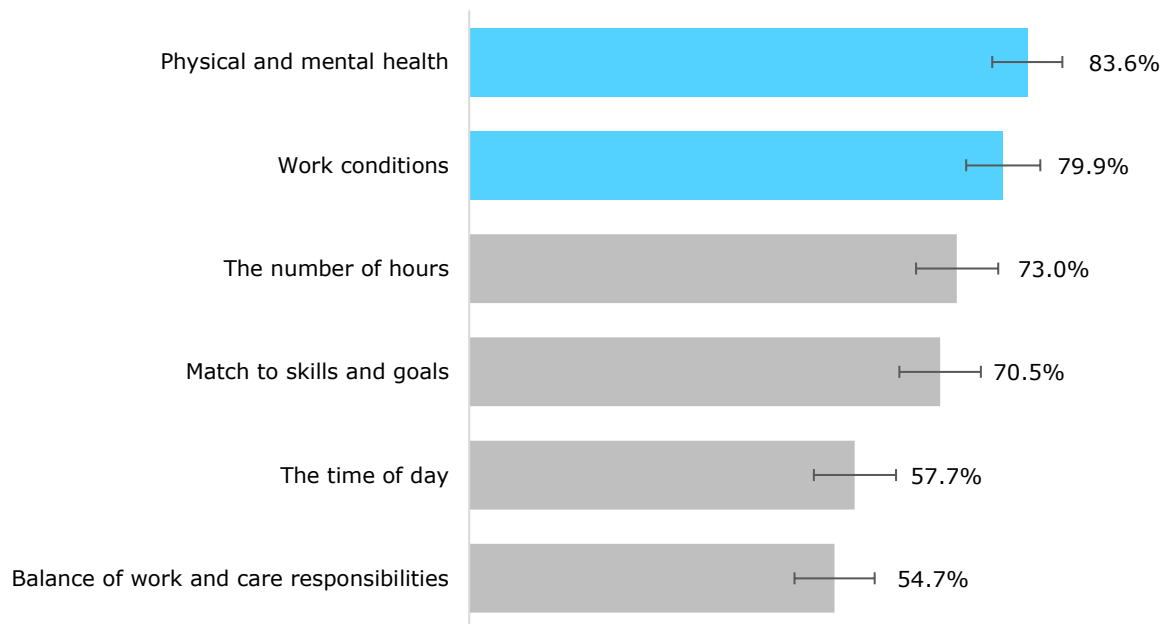
Respondents’ physical and mental health allowing them to work, as well as the work conditions provided by the employer were considered an important or extremely important non-financial factor for just under 84 percent of respondents without children in decisions around paid work

For all non-financial factors respondents were asked about, at least 50 percent of respondents without children rated them as important or extremely important in informing their decisions around paid work.

Respondents’ physical and mental health allowing them to work was rated as an important or extremely important factor for **83.6 percent** of respondents without children.

79.9 percent said the **work conditions provided by the employer** was an important or extremely important factor.

Percentage who thought listed non-financial factors were important or extremely important in decisions around paid work



Note: Total respondents = 810, total weighted respondents = 688,411.

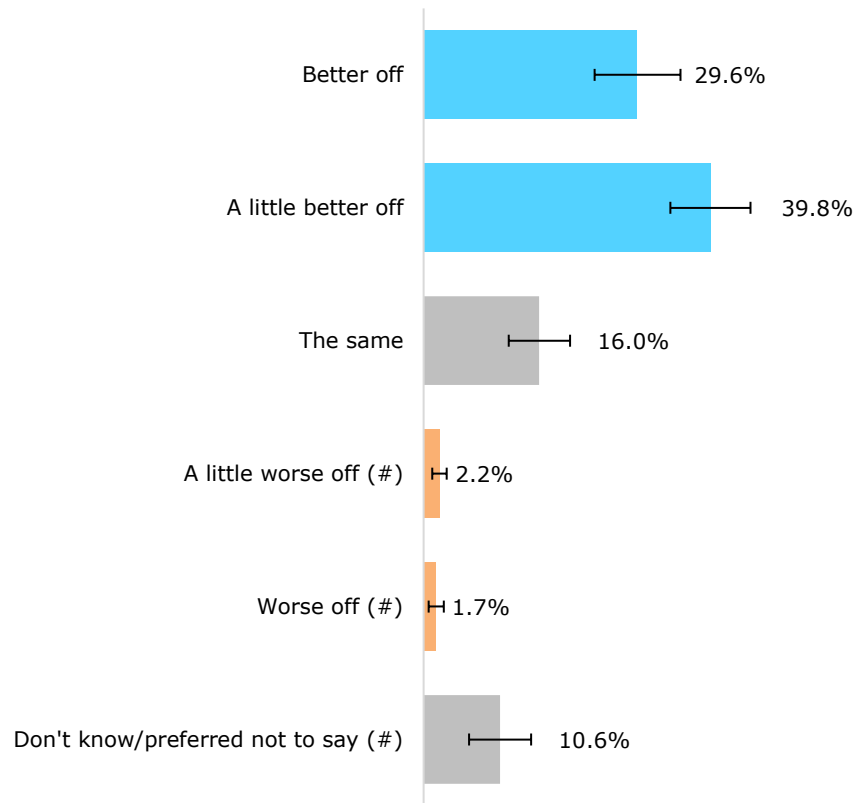
Just over 69 percent of respondents without children said that they would be either a little better off, or better off financially if they were to earn an additional \$100 per week from a job

29.6 percent of respondents with children said they would be **better off** if they were to earn an additional \$100 per week from a job.

39.8 percent said they would be **a little better off**.

In total, **69.4 percent** of respondents with children said they would be **better off to some degree**.

2.2 (± 1.0) percent said they would be **a little worse off**, and **1.7 (± 1.1) percent** said they would be **worse off**.



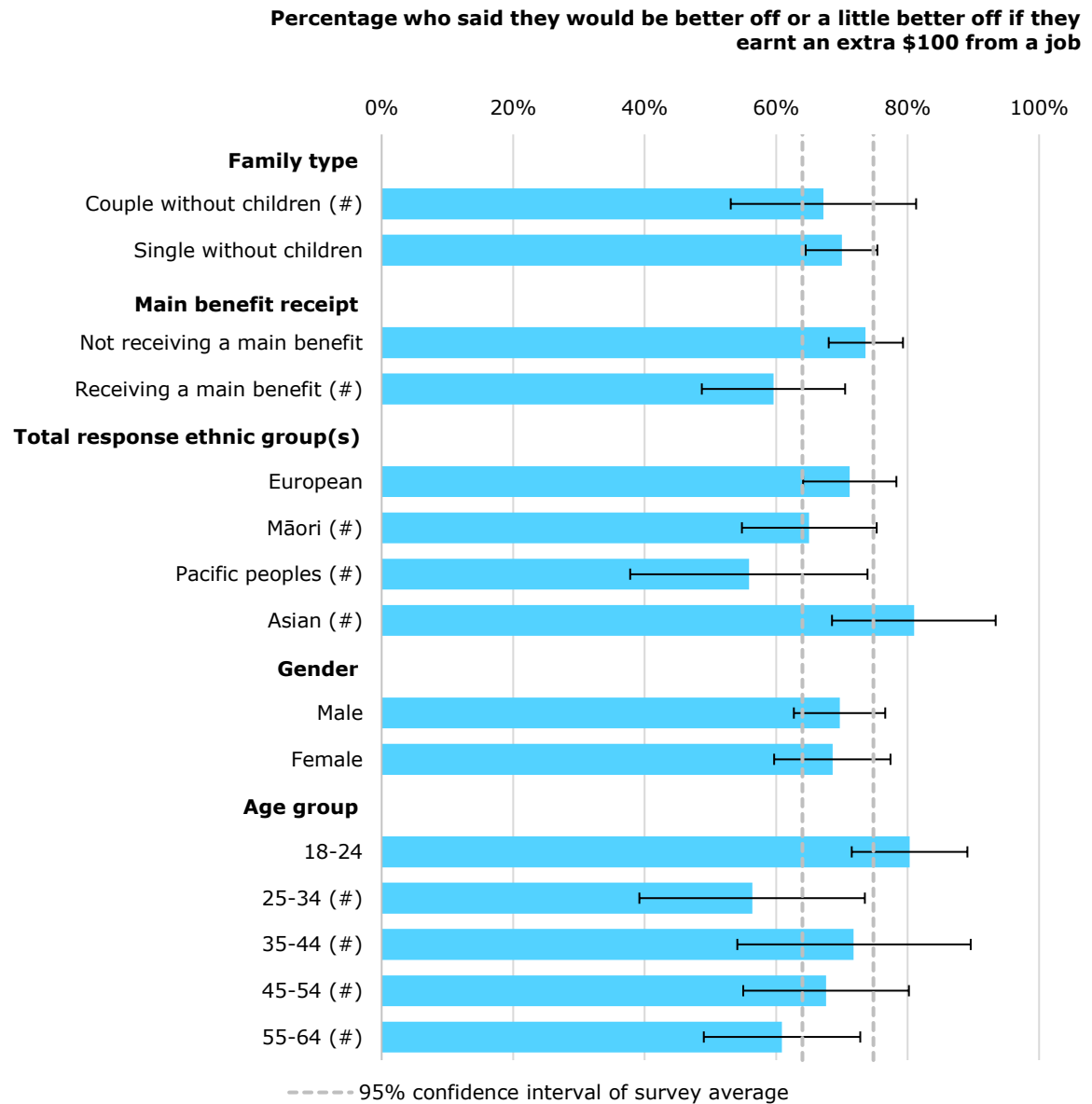
Note: Total respondents = 810, total weighted respondents = 688,411.

There were no statistically significant differences at the sub-group level in the proportion of respondents without children who said they would be better off or a little better off if they earned an extra \$100 from a job

The proportion of respondents without children who said they would be better off or a little better off if they earned an extra \$100 from a job ranged between 55 and 81 percent depending on sub-group.

While no statistically significant differences were found, respondents who identified as Asian, or were aged 18 to 24, appeared slightly more likely to say they would be better off or a little better off.

Respondents who were receiving a main benefit, identified as Pacific peoples, or were aged 25 to 34 or 55 to 64, appeared slightly less likely to say they would be better off or a little better off.

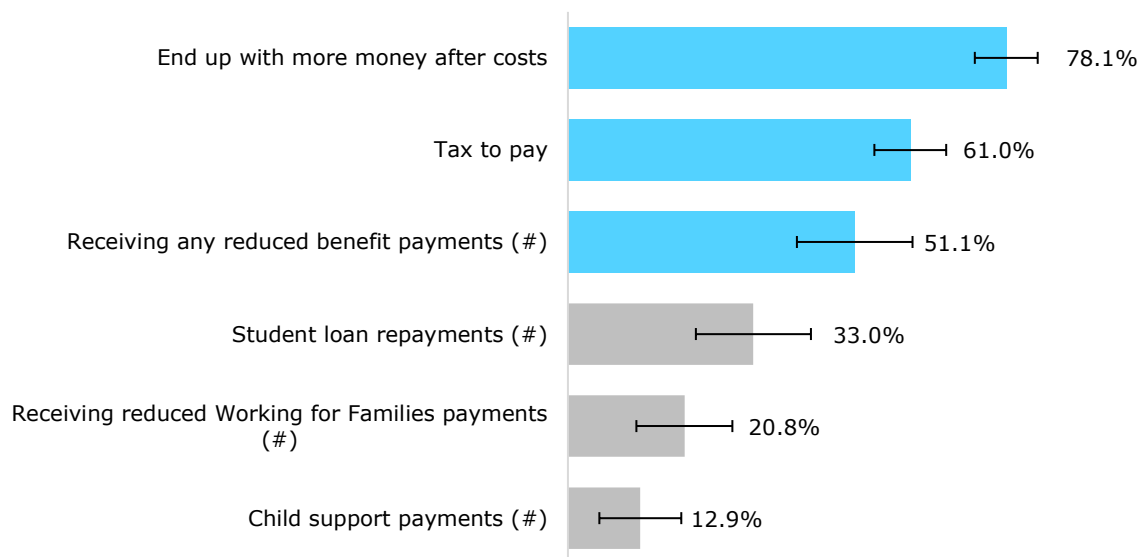


Just over 78 percent of respondents without children said that ending up with more money after costs was an important or extremely important financial factor when deciding if they would take an opportunity to earn an extra \$100 per week from a job

Ending up with more money after costs was an important or extremely important financial factor for **78.1 percent** of respondents without children when deciding if they would take an opportunity to earn an extra \$100 per week from a job.

Tax to pay on earnings (61 percent) and receiving any reduced benefit payments (51.1 ± 10.3 percent) were also commonly ranked as either important or extremely important financial factors.

Percentage who thought listed financial factors were important or extremely important in deciding to take an opportunity to earn an extra \$100 per week from a job



Note 1: Total respondents = 810, total weighted respondents = 688,411.

Note 2: Percentages exclude "not applicable" responses

Respondents were given an opportunity to provide up to five other responses regarding financial factors that would be important when deciding if they would take an opportunity to earn an extra \$100 per week from a job.

Common factors provided by respondents who provided other responses included:

- having more money for other expenses
- needing to factor in time for travel
- needing to consider their tax bracket and/or current entitlements.