

Findings from the 2024 Survey of Registered Music Therapists

The 2024 Survey aimed to obtain statistical information “to promote better understanding of music therapy in New Zealand, and to support registration, pay scales and other employment opportunities that would enhance work opportunities in NZ”. It was developed by Music Therapy New Zealand council representatives and administered by the New Zealand Music Therapy Registration Board. Applicants for registration gave permission for the deidentified statistical information to be shared with Music Therapy New Zealand. Dr Daphne Rickson completed the analysis and prepared this report¹.

There were 78 responses to the survey (approximately 87% of eligible participants). All respondents identified as Registered Music Therapists. One also identified as a counsellor, one as a Regional Centre Manager, a third as a lecturer, and another as a supervisor.

Personal Demographics

The therapists identified as male (18), female (58), non-binary (1) and cisgender (1). Twelve respondents were aged between 20-30 years; 25 between 31-40 years; 22 between 41-50 years; 11 between 51-60 years; 7 between 61-70 years; and 1 was 70+ years.

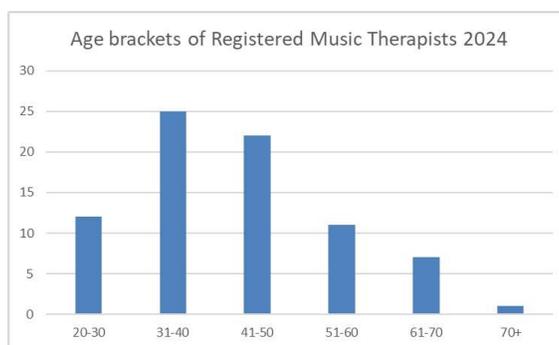


Figure 1: Age brackets of RMTh

Fifty-two of the therapists identified solely as New Zealand Citizens, and three as Māori. Twenty-three other therapists listed a further fourteen ethnicities (3 or less in each category) including Samoan, Australian, Chinese, Taiwanese, Southeast Asian, Korean, Malaysian, Indonesian, UK, Spanish, Polish, Irish, German, and Sri Lankan.

The therapists were located primarily in Wellington (25), Auckland (17) Christchurch (9) and Hawkes Bay (6). In other regions there were less than five therapists, including Northland, Waikato, Blenheim, Wairarapa, Dunedin, Invercargill, Kapiti, Nelson, Oamaru, and West Coast. Three therapists were also located overseas.

Respondents' median length of registration in New Zealand was six years, and the average eight years, with a range from 26 years to 1 year. Twenty-two therapists had also been registered overseas. The median length of overseas registration was four years, and the average was 6.7 years, with a range from 29 years to 1 year.

Professional Demographics

The ages of music therapy clients were relatively even across the lifespan, although only one respondent reported working with premature babies (see Figure 2: Client Age Groups).

¹ This report contains the findings of the survey only. A discussion regarding the meaning and utility of the findings was beyond the brief of the author.

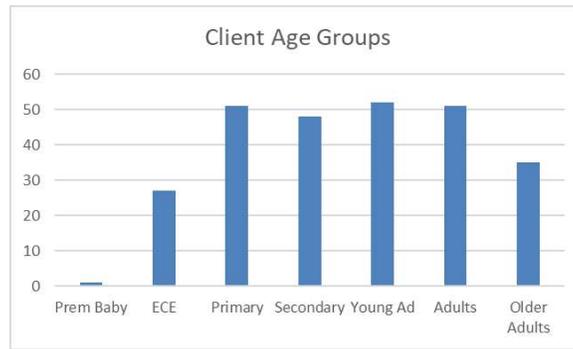


Figure 2: Client Age Groups

The survey asked respondents to indicate what “type of organisation/facilities” they work for/in, with 18 examples given. Findings show that therapists are employed in a variety of contexts, with the median and average both 3, and a range from 10 (1 RMTh), 8 (1 RMTh), 7 (5 RMTh), 6 (4 RMTh), 5 (5 RMTh), 4 (11 RMTh), 3 (17 RMTh), 2 (10 RMTh), to 1 (22 RMTh). The RMTh are predominantly working in private practice, education contexts, or for charitable / non-profit organisations (see Figure 3: Context for Employment). However, within the 245 organisations/facilities that were indicated, it is likely that there were crossovers. For example, someone might have indicated that they were employed by an aged care facility and, for the same contract, that they were employed by a charitable organisation; or that they worked in private practice contracted to a range of facilities. Further, it was also difficult to incorporate responses from therapists who reported they were working for “Secondary Health”, “Pain Management”, “Grief Counselling”, and “Sexual Violence” organisations, as it was unclear where this work was taking place and/or who the employing agency might be.

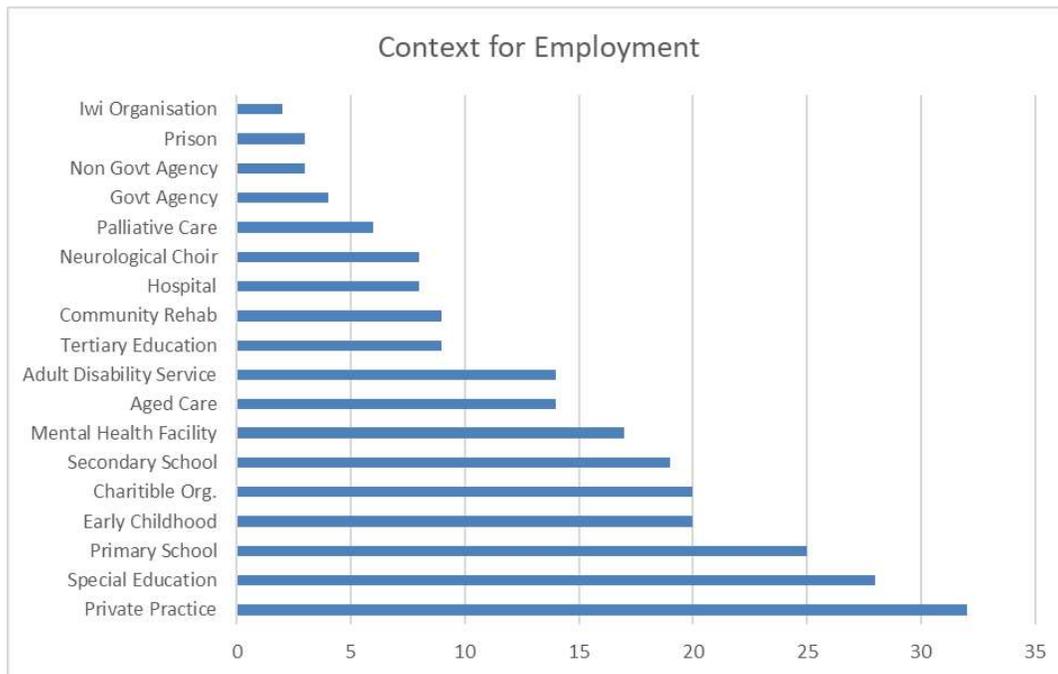


Figure 3: Context for Employment

Similarly, the survey asked respondents to indicate what “population group” they worked with, and 17 examples were given. The graph below presents findings from these 17 categories, using the descriptors respondents were asked to choose from. The findings seem to suggest that RMTh were predominantly working with people who have developmental challenges, are neurodivergent, have a physical disability, mental health challenges, and/or high and complex needs. An accurate interpretation is difficult however, because respondents were not asked to indicate just one descriptor

that best suited the population/s they worked with. It is possible, for example, that some indicated that they work with people who have “high and complex needs” AND “physical disabilities”, or people who have “learning disabilities” AND “chromosomal disorders” when referring to the same group of people.

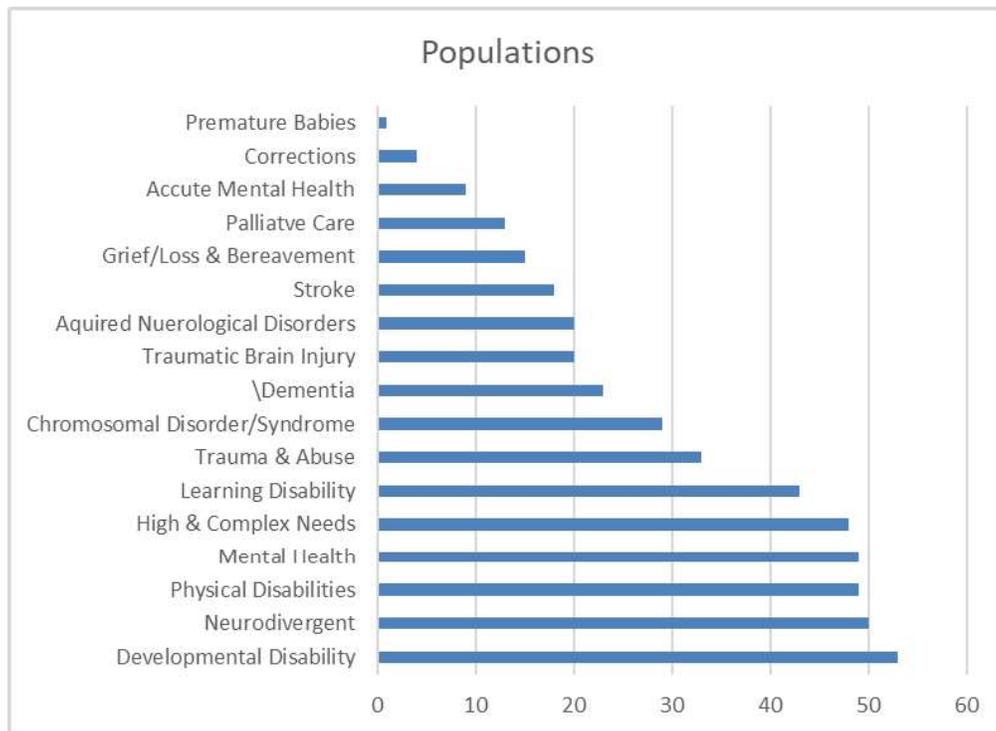


Figure 4: Client populations

The hours worked per week (on average) ranged from 50 to two, with an average of 28, and a median of 32.