



## **Community Support Workers – A Job Evaluation Exercise**

The Public Service Association (PSA) in consultation with employers<sup>1</sup> commissioned an evaluation exercise comparing Community Support Workers (intellectual disability) with Therapy Assistants and Correction Officers 1.

### **Methodology**

After agreement by the Department of Labour, the evaluation was undertaken by this consultant using the Equitable Job Evaluation system (EJE).

The PSA in conjunction with employers supplied job descriptions and located job holders for interview in each of the occupational groups. All but one interview was face to face generally in the place of employment. The remaining interview was by telephone. All interviews were completed by this consultant.

The occupational group central to the evaluation was Community Support Workers (CSW) in the residential intellectual disability sector. These people work in residential homes in the community where people previously housed in institutions now live. In order to make sure that we captured a 'typical' CSW job, interviews were held with 2 workers in homes in Auckland and 2 workers in two homes in Levin.

I interviewed 2 Therapy Assistants (TA) at Keneperu Hospital. Both work with physiotherapists in the rehabilitation area, although one also takes some instruction from a speech therapist.

Three Corrections Officers (CO) were interviewed – two in Paremoremo (one had until recently worked at Mt Eden Women's prison which was closed down) and one by telephone at Invercargill Prison.

The EJE questionnaire was used for the interviews in association with an early version of the Spotlight tool<sup>2</sup> to assist the identification of less visible service work skills.

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<sup>1</sup> Spectrum Care, NZ Care, Capital Coast Health, Department of Corrections

<sup>2</sup> This tool was commissioned by the NZ Department of Labour and has been developed by a team lead by Dr. Anne Junor. It aims to provide a process by which generally undervalued and 'hidden' skills essential to the competent performance of service sector work can be identified and measured in HR processes such as job evaluation.

Once the questionnaire had been completed, they were sent to at least one job holder and their manager for verification. All those consulted felt that the material in the questionnaire fairly represented the work of the particular occupation. Minor changes were made to the Correction Officer 1 questionnaire in response to comments by the Prison Service Senior HR Advisor.

The questionnaire plus the job descriptions were then used in the evaluation against the EJE factor plan.

Once the evaluations were completed they were given to Lyndy Young of Pulse HR<sup>3</sup> for independent validation. Lyndy agreed with all of the scores for all of the jobs and felt that the evaluation rationales were supported by the available job information in the questionnaires and job descriptions.

She made a couple of comments:

- Factor 3 (interpersonal skills) CSW – she noted that she almost wanted to stretch this to a level 3.5 score – but that it did not reach a 4<sup>4</sup>
- Factor 6 (responsibility for resources) Corrections officers – she wondered if the majority of security was more ‘day to day’ patrolling etc whether this would have lowered the score to a level 2. However, she agreed that security was probably the ‘core’ of this job and that this would make it a level 3

## Findings

The EJE system has twelve factors (listed in the tables below) – 4 in the skills family, 4 in the responsibility family and 4 in the demands family.

Each factor has a number of ‘levels’ (although not all factors have the same number of levels) with a descriptor of the level. The evaluation aims to identify the level that provides the closest fit with the job information from the questionnaire and the job description.

The factors do not contribute equally to the final score. The skills family contributes 45%, the responsibility family 45% and the demands family 10%. Within factor families, the different factors are weighted according to the number of levels in the factor – the greater the number of levels, the more the factor contributes. Thus the knowledge factor (11 levels) has a greater weight than physical skills (5 levels).

Table 1 shows the factor level assigned to each job. Table 2 shows the weighted scores. The ‘total weighted score’ at the bottom of table 2 is the final score for each job.

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<sup>3</sup> Lyndy has been a job evaluation practitioner for some years. She has worked with a variety of systems and was a member of the EJE development team. She is a director of Pulse HR.

<sup>4</sup> Half scores are not used in EJE

**Table 1: Factor levels**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>CSW</b>	<b>TA</b>	<b>CO</b>
1. Knowledge	3	3	3
2. Problem solving	2	2	2
3. Interpersonal skills	3	3	3
4. Physical skills	3	3	2
5. Responsibility for leadership	1	1	1
6. Responsibility for resources	2	2	3
7. Responsibility for organisational outcomes	2	2	2
8. Responsibility for services to people	4	3	3
9. Emotional demands	3	3	3
10. Sensory demands	2F (3)	2F (3)	3
11. Physical demands	3	3	2
12. Working conditions	2B	2A	3B

**Table 2: Weighted scores**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>CSW</b>	<b>TA</b>	<b>CO</b>
1. Knowledge	44	44	44
2. Problem solving	28	28	28
3. Interpersonal skills	56	56	56
4. Physical skills	42	42	28
<b>Weighted score</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>156</b>
5. Responsibility for leadership	15	15	15
6. Responsibility for resources	30	30	45
7. Responsibility for organisational outcomes	30	30	30
8. Responsibility for services to people	60	45	45
<b>Weighted score</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>135</b>
9. Emotional demands	19	19	19
10. Sensory demands	19	19	19
11. physical demands	19	19	13
12. Working conditions	19	13	25
<b>Weighted score</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>76</b>
<b>Total weighted score</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>367</b>

## **Conclusions**

In my opinion the CSW and CO roles are substantially similar in terms of size – jobs with these scores could well end up in the same job size band within an organisation. It is also likely that the TA role could end up in the same band.

Overall, I think the data supports a view that these jobs are of substantially similar value.

## **Other remuneration considerations**

Remuneration is often influenced by other considerations in addition to job size. Two of the most frequent considerations are:

- Recruitment and retention issues
- Ability of the employer to pay

Employers of CWS report difficulty in recruiting and retaining suitable staff – especially in the current labour market. Corrections report a ‘moderate’ turnover but anticipate an increasing demand for staff due to an expansion of prison facilities. It would be difficult to argue that recruitment and retention issues affect one occupation more than another.

Correction officers are public servants. CSW staff are employed by NGO and private organisations dependent on public sector contract funding. Ability to pay is very likely a factor in wage determination of the two groups.

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