

Becoming a Vaccinating Health Worker

We're expanding the vaccinating workforce in Aotearoa by building the skills of people already working in the health sector. The vaccinating health worker (VHW) role is a great opportunity to add another skillset to your kete and support vaccination programmes across the motu.

About the role

VHW are vaccinators that are authorised to administer a range of vaccines to specific age groups under supervision.

The VHW role has two-stages:

Stage 1 VHW can administer:

- COVID-19 (Pfizer) to people aged 12 years+
- Influenza vaccines to people aged 12 years+
- Human Papillomavirus (HPV9) vaccine to people aged 11 years +
- Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis (whooping cough) (Tdap) to people aged 11 years+.

Stage 2 VHW can prepare and administer all the Stage 1 vaccines and:

- COVID-19 (Pfizer) and Influenza to people aged 5 years+
- Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine to people aged 5 years+.

Who can become a VHW?

You will already be working or interested in working in the health sector – for example, as a pharmacy technician, kaiāwhina, community health worker or healthcare assistant. Or you have been trained as a health professional in New Zealand (NZ) or overseas but are not currently holding a NZ practicing certificate.

How do you become a Vaccinating Health Worker?

You successfully complete a training programme, which includes:

- online learning
- practical workshops
- authorisation
- observation and supervision
- practical assessments

What training will you receive?

The training covers a range of core learning topics mainly provided by your employer, and vaccine- specific training provided by the Immunisation Advisory Centre (IMAC). You can get an overview of the training for this role by checking out the Vaccinating Health Worker: [Capability Matrix](#).

You will take part in training and must pass theory and workplace practical assessments to become a VHW. You will also be required to apply for authorisation. Please see the following page for details on how to apply.

The vaccine specific training includes:

- An online course at each stage which can be delivered in a group setting, using the online content, or as a face-to-face workshop facilitated by IMAC
- A face-to-face practical workshop at each stage
- Observation and assessments in the workplace under the guidance of an authorised vaccinator with a minimum of six months vaccinating experience.

Core learning topics include:

- Te Tiriti o Waitangi, cultural awareness, and engaging effectively with Māori
- Working with culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- Working with people with disabilities
- Working with people experiencing mental health and addiction needs
- Communicating and interpersonal relationships
- Health and safety, personal protection equipment (PPE), and infection prevention and control (IPC)
- Privacy/confidentiality
- Health information/health literacy.

Some of these courses such as Infection Prevention and Control and supporting those with disabilities are also available on the IMAC website as separate courses.

It is your employer's responsibility to either deliver this core learning or enable access to it. Please discuss how you access these core learning topics with your employer.

It is expected that you will have at least completed training on privacy and health information/health literacy before attending the practical workshop.

Your employer will also ensure you complete basic life support (CPR) and Aotearoa Immunisation Register (AIR) training.

The vaccine specific training material has been developed by IMAC. Access to this training is available through the **IMAC Learning Management System (LMS)**. Once you have completed your online training your employer will register you for a practical workshop with IMAC.

On successful completion of the practical workshop, you will receive a workbook that you need to complete with your clinical supervisor.

Authorisation

Authorisation applications are done through the online Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora Workforce Request portal www.workforcerequests.health.nz

You need to apply for authorisation after you have completed the practical workshop for both Stage 1 and Stage 2. This authorisation allows you to practice vaccinating under 1:1 supervision without a standing order or prescription.

Once you've completed the workbook and a practical assessment, you'll upload these to the portal, and you will receive an updated authorisation letter that updates your supervision condition to the standard 1:6.

Training and authorisation are valid for two years. Every two years you'll need to complete update training (available free online) and apply for authorisation renewal.

If you have any questions or issues with applying for authorisation using the online portal, please email: vaccinatorauthorisations@healthnz.govt.nz

Please note, you need to be an authorised VHW Stage 1 and have completed all the entry criteria before being nominated by your employer to access VHW Stage 2 training.

What are your responsibilities as a VHW?

Once you have completed the required training and attained authorisation you must work within your authorised scope of practice.

Your responsibilities are to:

- work within the limits of your training and competence while performing tasks under the Medicines Regulations 1984
- attend and complete all required education and training to upskill and ensure your VHW knowledge is current
- report all errors and adverse events
- clearly document your role and name for each vaccination event in AIR or your organisation's PMS
- adhere to all workplace systems, policies, processes as set out by your employer

We highly recommend that you have indemnity insurance or be provided indemnity insurance by your employer.

Is the VHW a full-time role?

Being a VHW can be full-time or part-time. Agreement on your hours of work is between you and your employer. Your employment hours depend on the employer's vaccinating service delivery model. For some workplaces, administering vaccines might make up a significant part of your workload and as demand fluctuates you may also assist in other areas.



Keen to get involved?

Talk to your employer if you are interested in becoming a VHW.

Information for VHWs, supervisors and employers is available at Health NZ | Te Whatu Ora Vaccinating workforce

For information on the IMAC VHW courses see [IMAC courses and events](#).