

Information for Vaccinating Health Worker Clinical Supervisors

We're expanding the vaccinating workforce in Aotearoa by building the skills of people already working in the health sector. Vaccinating health workers (VHW) are vaccinators that are authorised to administer a limited range of vaccines to specific age groups under supervision of a registered health professional.

Why is the VHW Clinical Supervisor role important?

VHW Clinical Supervisors are critical to the success of the VHW role by helping ensure vaccines are prepared and administered safely and competently.

As a VHW Clinical Supervisor, you will:

- provide direct clinical supervision for VHWs to facilitate the best care for the health consumer, and for VHWs to safely and effectively prepare and/or administer vaccines
- provide support for training VHWs as they work through their training and workbook
- obtain consent from the consumer (this may be performed by another registered health professional on site)
- be onsite, and within earshot/calling distance for VHWs to ask for assistance or to escalate any areas of concern
- know the authorisation limits of the VHW you are supervising.
- confirm that the VHW is authorised while the VHW practices vaccinating and completes their practical assessments.
- be immediately available to support the VHW in the event of an adverse reaction.

Your employer should support both you in the role of a VHW Clinical Supervisor, and the VHW in their role.

Who can become a VHW Clinical Supervisor?

It is important that we have experienced and confident registered health professionals providing direct clinical supervision for VHWs.

A VHW Clinical Supervisor will:

- be a New Zealand registered healthcare professional
- be an authorised vaccinator or pharmacist vaccinator
- have relevant, recent vaccination experience
- have been nominated as a suitable candidate to be a supervisor by your employer
- have completed [VHW supervisor training](#) (this is highly recommended).

While the VHW completes the observation, supervision, workbook and practical assessment requirements there is a 1:1 ratio of VHW Clinical Supervisor to VHWs.

After the VHW has submitted their practical assessment the ratio of VHW Clinical Supervisor to VHW when preparing and administering vaccines becomes 1:6.

What training is required for the role?

A VHW Clinical Supervisor must have a full understanding of the scope of the VHW role, their training and authorisation pathway, and the responsibilities of being a supervisor.

We strongly recommend you complete the 'Course for Supervisors of Vaccinating Health Workers'.

This course is available on the [IMAC Learning Management System](#) (LMS) and is free. To access the course, just log in to the IMAC LMS and register for the course.

What are the responsibilities of the VHW Clinical Supervisors?

VHW Clinical Supervisors are responsible for providing direction and guidance to the VHW to ensure their consistent competent practice.

The following Guideline is a useful reference and guide in this context. It is important to be familiar with the Principles of Delegation in this document. [Nursing Council's Guideline: Delegation of care by a registered nurse to a health care assistant.](#)

Supervisors must always be onsite and within constant ear shot/easy calling distance of the VHW and be immediately available for reasonable access, i.e. must always be available on the premises.

Supervisors must work within their scope of practice, and therefore can only supervise VHW administering the vaccines they themselves are authorised to administer.

Note: Pharmacist vaccinators who cannot administer tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (whooping cough) (Tdap) to people aged 11 years old, can still supervise VHWs administering Tdap to people aged 11 years old.

As usual, Supervisors must adhere to the terms of their employment contract and to all systems, policies, processes and frameworks set out by their employer. This includes effective oversight of the employees they supervise.

What is the difference between Clinical Supervisor and the VHW Practical Assessor?

The VHW Clinical Supervisor may be different to the VHW Practical Assessor. The VHW Practical Assessor must be an authorised vaccinator or pharmacist vaccinator with a minimum of six months vaccinating experience.

The VHW Practical Assessor completes the assessments of VHWs to enable them to update the supervision condition of their authorisation.

VHW Clinical Supervisors can carry out this role as well if they have the requisite experience.

What is the VHW scope of practice?

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+.



Keen to get involved?

Talk with your employer if you're interested in becoming a VHW Clinical Supervisor. You can also find out more about the role and the VHW programme by checking out the following resources:

- [Vaccinating workforce](#) webpage which also has links to Information Sheets on 'Becoming a Vaccinating Health Worker' and 'Information for Employers'
- [VHW Capability matrix](#)
- [IMAC webpage](#) for training information.