

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.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we developed the COVID-19 Vaccinator Working Under Supervision (CVWUS) role. This role was short term and finished on 1 June 2023. We're building on the success of this initiative to enable healthcare workers to administer a broader range of vaccines.

As well as contributing to building our vaccinating workforce, the Vaccinating Health Worker (VHW) role will help diversify the health workforce by training more Māori and Pacific people to become vaccinators. This helps us have the right people in the right places at the right time to vaccinate our most vulnerable, and to help protect tamariki, rangatahi, whānau and at-risk population groups from vaccine preventable diseases.

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 or overseas but are not currently holding a NZ practising certificate.

How do you become a Vaccinating Health Worker?

You successfully complete a training programme, which includes:

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

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:

- A series of online courses which can be delivered in a group setting, using the online content, or as a face-to-face workshop facilitated by IMAC
- Face-to-face practical workshops 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 Learning 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 Immunisation Register training e.g. Aotearoa Immunisation Register (AIR) and/or COVID-19 Immunisation Register (CIR) 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

The VHW role has two-stages (VHW Stage 1 and VHW Stage 2):

STAGE 1 – on completion you will be able to 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 – on completion you will be able to 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+.

You need to apply for authorisation at defined points during your training. For example, you can apply for authorisation for Stage 1 once you have completed the COVID-19 [and](#) Influenza training requirement, and then again after completing the requirements for HPV9 and Tdap.

The authorisation process is completed using an online portal www.workforcerequests.health.nz. You will need to submit the required documentation relating to the stage you are at. If you have any questions or issues with applying for authorisation using the online portal, please email: vaccinatorauthorisations@health.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?

As a VHW you have completed the required training and attained authorisation to 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 Medicine 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 the applicable immunisation register, for example CIR or AIR
- adhere to all workplace systems, policies, processes as set out by your employer
- ensure you are working under a valid standing order or prescription when completing your assessments.

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.

Resources

You can find out more about the VHW role, the training you'll be required to do, and the authorisation process by checking out the following resources:

- [Vaccinating workforce](#) webpage which also has links to Information Sheets on 'Vaccinating Health Worker Clinical Supervisors' and 'Information for Employers'.
- [IMAC webpage](#)
- [Capability Matrix](#)

Keen to get involved?

Please talk with your employer if you're interested in becoming a VHW.

You can also check out this website:

[Vaccinating workforce](#).