

Information for Employers

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 our tamariki, rangatahi, whānau and at-risk population groups from vaccine preventable diseases.

About the VHW role

The VHW role prepares pharmacy technicians, community health care workers, healthcare assistants and kaiāwhina to prepare and/or administer a range of vaccines after a period of training and authorisation.

There are two stages to the VHW role:

- Stage 1: VHWs will be able to administer COVID-19 (Pfizer) and the influenza vaccines for 12 years+ and vaccines for Human Papillomavirus (HPV9) and Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis (whooping cough) (Tdap) for 11 years+.
- Stage 2: VHWs will be able to prepare and administer all vaccines outlined in Stage 1, including administering COVID-19 (Pfizer) and influenza to 5 years+, and also MMR for 5 years+.

VHWs need to be authorised by Te Whatu Ora – Health New Zealand and have gained experience as a Stage 1 VHW before gaining access to VHW Stage 2 training.

The VHW operating model is a team-based approach. VHWs work under the clinical supervision and direction of a registered health practitioner.

As an employer, your role is to nominate and support the training of your staff to become a VHW or VHW Clinical Supervisor, and to ensure the proper procedures are followed.

Why do you need a VHW Clinical Supervisor?

The VHW doesn't work on their own. They join a team and require an experienced and capable registered health professional providing on site clinical supervision and direction to the VHW.

As a VHW Clinical Supervisor, they will need to:

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

There is a 1:6 ratio of VHW Clinical Supervisor to VHW for administering vaccines and a 1:1 ratio for preparing multi dose vials.

Note: 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.

Who can become a Vaccinating Health Worker?

A VHW applicant might already be working in the health sector - for example, as a pharmacy technician, kaiāwhina community health worker, or healthcare assistant. Or have been trained as a health professional in New Zealand or overseas, but is not currently holding a NZ practising certificate.

What do employers need to do?

Employers are ultimately accountable for service delivery, quality and safety.

This includes:

- supporting the VHW to complete the core learning requirements by either delivering the core learning requirements or enabling access to courses
- ensuring VHW clinical supervisors have appropriate knowledge on the scope of the VHW
- ensuring that the VHWs attend and complete any required upskilling education and training
- retaining up to date training records for VHWs, including authorisation and basic life support (CPR), to ensure these are valid at all times of practice
- ensure there is a standing order or prescription in place to allow the VHW to complete their assessments in the workplace
- ensuring VHW are appropriately trained and authorised and are working under clinical supervision by a registered health professional.
- ensure VHW are included in handovers and clinical updates to keep their vaccination knowledge current.

Employers must ensure the daily staff profile

- includes the required experience, skills and qualifications

- matches expected consumer needs and the constraints of the site arrangements.

Employers are expected to ensure that all VHW and VHW Clinical Supervisors have indemnity insurance. (This is highly recommended.)

What training is required for the VHW role?

The training covers a range of core learning topics mainly provided by you, as their 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](#).

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. Please contact your local IMAC team member to explore this option: www.immune.org.nz/our-team-immunisation-advisory-centre
- 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.

It is your responsibility as an employer to either deliver this core learning or enable access to it, as outlined above. Some of these modules such as Infection Prevention and Control and supporting those with disabilities are also available on the IMAC Learning website as separate courses.

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

As an employer you will also ensure your employee(s) complete basic life support (CPR) and Immunisation Register training eg. Aotearoa Immunisation Register (AIR) and/or COVID-19 Immunisation Register (CIR).

The vaccine specific training material has been developed by IMAC. Access to this training is available through the [IMAC Learning Management System](#) (LMS). Once the VHW has completed their online training you will register the VHW for a practical workshop with IMAC.

On successful completion of the practical workshop the VHW will receive a workbook that they need to complete with their clinical supervisor.

Resources to support employers

Resources will be available to support employers to take on board this new health workforce.

We suggest you regularly check the:

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