

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 is short term and finishes 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 helping us build our vaccinating workforce, the Vaccinating Health Worker (VHW) role will help diversify the workforce by training more Māori and Pacific people to vaccinate. 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/families and at-risk population groups.

Who can become a VHW?

You will already be working in the health sector - for example, as a pharmacy technician or kaiāwhina - or 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?

There are two ways you can become a VHW:

- If you are already an authorised CVWUS, you can transition to become a VHW by undertaking further training
- If you are not already a CVWUS, you can enter the learning pathway to become a VHW.

Your employer needs to nominate and support your training to become a VHW, and they need to ensure there is a VHW clinical supervisor in your workplace.

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.

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 training sessions at each stage
- Observation and assessments in the workplace under the guidance of an authorised vaccinator with a minimum of two years 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
- Communicating and interpersonal relationships
- Health and safety, personal protection equipment (PPE), and infection prevention and control (IPC)
- Ethics, privacy, and mental health
- 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.

Your employer will also ensure you complete CPR and Immunisation Register training e.g. COVID-19 Immunisation Register (CIR) training.

The vaccine specific training material has been developed by IMAC. Access to this training is through your employer sending a nomination to IMAC. Unique package codes to access each course are then sent to you.

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) 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 – on completion you will be able to prepare and administer all the Stage 1 vaccines, including administering COVID-19 (Pfizer) and influenza to 5 years+, and also MMR for 5 years+.

You apply for authorisation at defined points of 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. 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 apply for 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:

- working within the limits of your training and competence while performing tasks under the Medicine Regulations 1984

- attending and completing any required upskilling education and training
- reporting all errors and adverse events
- clearly documenting your role name in each vaccination event in the applicable immunisation register, for example CIR
- adhering to all workplace systems, policies, processes set out by your employer.

You're responsible for your workplace behaviour.

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 commitments. For some workplaces, administering vaccines might make up a significant part of your workload and as demand fluctuates you may also assist in another area of service delivery.

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:

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

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 | Ministry of Health NZ](#)