



Our approach to COVID-19 vaccination-what you need to know

We recognise the importance of Auckland Council playing a part in the response to COVID-19 by taking steps to control and reduce the spread of COVID-19 in Tāmaki Makaurau. We are also aware that vaccine requirements in the workplace are a common tool many countries around the world are using to stop the spread of COVID and to protect their workers and customers from the virus.

In considering our own response, front of mind for us are our legal obligations to you, your colleagues, and to the communities that you interact with while you are at work. We know that for some staff, this Guide will pose a hard choice. However, controlling and reducing the spread of COVID-19 is so important to Auckland and to New Zealand that we consider adopting this Guide is the responsible decision to make.

Principles that guide us

- We put the health and safety of our people and the people of Auckland first
- We're aware of the hazards we're potentially exposing our people to and have appropriate procedures in place to control them
- We respect and care for each other and our organisation

Why are we adopting this Guide?

The process we followed to decide our position on the place of the COVID-19 vaccinations in our workplaces was to engage widely with you, our people, and to undertake a comprehensive risk assessment of the nature of our business and how we operate on a day-to-day basis. We have also considered the reality that COVID-19 is increasingly present in Auckland and will be for the foreseeable future.

We determined that the nature of our roles is such that all roles, which carry out work in our offices, facilities, or other workplaces, involved an unacceptable level of risk of contracting COVID-19 and transmitting the virus to others. This is particularly the case given the ongoing prevalence of COVID-19 in Auckland (and so staff may be the source of infection for other staff).

Staff regularly interact with each other across roles, functions, and locations and there is no effective way to isolate these staff and, therefore, we consider there is an unacceptable risk of exposure within all Auckland Council workplaces. In addition, our staff frequently have contact with customers and visitors, which will include people that may be at higher risk from the virus (including children under 12 and vulnerable adults). Again, we have no effective way to separate our staff from such vulnerable members of the community.

Finally, through the consultation process, the majority of staff told us that they have taken the necessary steps to be vaccinated and they want the reassurance of knowing that their colleagues are vaccinated as well.



What is Auckland Council's position on vaccinations and our workplaces?

Because of the material risk of contracting and transmitting the COVID-19 virus, we have decided that our employees who work in our facilities, offices, or out in the field must be vaccinated. In addition, contractors, and volunteers who work in our facilities and offices, or who work under our direct control and influence must be vaccinated to undertake this work for Auckland Council.

What does fully vaccinated mean?

This Guide requires you to be “fully vaccinated”. We will be informed by the Ministry of Health’s guidelines about what is meant by fully vaccinated. As several of our workplaces may require vaccination certificates, the level of vaccination required to be eligible for a My Vaccine Pass will be regarded as fully vaccinated for the purposes of this Guide.

Booster shots

As we will follow the Ministry of Health’s definition of what “fully vaccinated” means, this may, at some time in the future, include booster shots and where they are considered necessary to be eligible for the My Vaccine Pass, you will need to have received the booster shot.

Where booster shots are not considered a requirement to get a My Vaccine Pass, they will not be required under this Guide. We do, however, considering the medical evidence in support of booster shots, strongly recommend you take up the option.

Who does this Guide apply to?

It covers all Auckland Council employees and anyone else that provides services to us in an Auckland Council workplace, apart from their home, where they are required to interact with our people or others as part of the role. This includes volunteers, contractors, and contingent workers.

This Guide will also apply to new employees and anyone applying for a role with Auckland Council will be required to provide acceptable proof of vaccination before an offer of employment will be made.

There are separate policies that apply to elected representatives, customers and members of the public, and other people who undertake a statutory or similar role.

What about the government's COVID-19 Public Health Response (Vaccinations) Order 2021 (Order) that mandates vaccination for certain workers?

We will comply with the Order, including any future amendments or if it is replaced by different legislation, to the extent that the Order affects our business. Where the Order does not address matters relating to the COVID-19 vaccination process for a particular role, the terms of this Guide will apply.



How do I demonstrate that I am vaccinated?

You will be required to provide evidence of vaccination by way of the My Vaccine Pass (or other equivalent proof of vaccination). If you have an exemption, you will need to provide the exemption certificate.

If your role is covered by the Order, you will need to provide the additional information provided for in the Order.

Are my vaccination details confidential?

As with all your personal information, access to this information is tightly restricted. It will be recorded on Tupu on your personal record and, as with other matters on this record, the only persons who will be able to access this information are your people leader, and certain positions within People & Culture for purposes of reporting or to follow-up on anything to do with your vaccination status.

If you consider that information on your Tupu record is inaccurate or incomplete you should discuss this with your people leader who can either amend the record or raise the matter with People & Culture through Awhina.

Are there exceptions to the requirement to be vaccinated?

We know that vaccines are the best way to keep ourselves, our colleagues, and our communities safe. They are most effective when everyone in a community, who is able to be vaccinated, has received the vaccine. We also recognise that there may be certain exceptional situations where it is medically inappropriate for a particular individual to be vaccinated and in such circumstances we will ask you for an exemption certificate.

This Guide will not apply if an exception to our approach for a role or individual is agreed to by an Executive Lead Team member.

If someone who is exempt under this Guide needs to come into our offices, facilities, or other location, we will work with the person to put in place measures to protect the individual and others in that workplace.

What will happen if I am not vaccinated?

Our priority is to keep you in employment if that is possible, having regard to the purpose of this Guide. With that in mind, we will:

- Encourage you to seek support from your union or an appropriate support person. You should talk to them about your situation and why you are not vaccinated. We recognise this is an important issue for you, but we ask that you keep an open mind about your options.
- Meet with you to understand the reason for you not being vaccinated and try to work through possible scenarios that will allow you to remain in your role and comply with this



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Guide. For example, if you are comfortable with a government-approved vaccine other than the Pfizer vaccine, that is available, this could be an option to consider.

- Work through with you if there is a reasonable, alternative option either for you to carry out your current role or to take up another role in the organisation, for which you are suitably qualified and where you may not need to be vaccinated. This will require us to assess if it is workable for us, as your employer, to have you to carry out the role and not attend the workplace (or if there are other acceptable ways to manage the risk).
- If feasible, agree with you to trial an alternative way to work or an alternative role for a specified period, on the understanding that neither of us is obligated to make the arrangement a permanent one.

If at the end of this process, you are still not vaccinated or we are unable to agree to a workable alternative option, we will give you the notice in your employment agreement. You may choose to be vaccinated at any point during your notice period and for a month after your employment ends. In that event, and on sighting evidence of vaccination, we will reinstate you to your role on the same terms and conditions (including service) as you previously enjoyed. This will be subject to you completing any further vaccination requirements, after being reinstated, within the Ministry of Health's guidance on the minimum period between vaccination shots.

If this discussion is taking place after 17 January 2022, we will need to consider what duties you might undertake remotely or if we can temporarily manage the risk of infection and transmission by using measures such as face coverings, physical distancing, or working from home or another location. If that is not possible, and you are not able to work you will be on paid special leave, while this process is being worked through.

Can I challenge or question any decision or outcome that I do not agree with?

Yes, you can. If you are an employee, your employment agreement, whether you are covered by an individual or collective agreement, contains a process for resolving employment relationship problems. That process can be used in this situation.

If you are a contractor or volunteer, and are concerned about any final decision or outcome, you should raise this, at first instance, with your Auckland Council liaison manager.

What support is there for employees to be vaccinated?

We are keen to support employees to be vaccinated. With this in mind:

- You can, in discussion with your people leader, arrange a time during work hours to get vaccinated
- If, after the vaccination, you need reasonable time off to recover from any side effects this can be taken without having to use paid sick leave (this may require you to provide a medical certificate in accordance with our sick leave guidelines)
- We will continue to provide you with access to information from trusted sources, such as the Ministry of Health, to answer any questions you may have about vaccinations



If there is anything else that might reasonably assist you to be vaccinated, you should raise this with your people leader or contact People & Culture.

Vaccination certificate requirements for customers and visitors

In addition to this Guide, we are looking at requiring vaccination certificates (also known as the My Vaccine Pass) to enter certain parts of our business. What those areas are will be determined in due course and will involve discussion with union and health, safety and wellbeing representatives, as well as other key stakeholders. You will be advised as the decision is made about each business area. If the decision is made to introduce a vaccination requirement in your area, you are expected to ensure you hold and maintain a My Vaccine Pass.

When will this Guide take effect and what is the position for the period between the Guide coming into force and the date by which staff must be vaccinated?

This Guide will start to apply on 3 December 2021 and will require that all staff be fully vaccinated before 17 January 2022.

For the period between 3 December 2021 and 17 January 2022, many staff will continue to work from home or be on leave during the Christmas holiday shutdown. For those staff who need to work from our offices, premises, or in the community, they will need to be fully vaccinated and will be asked to show their people leader their My Vaccine Pass.

Review of this Guide

We are aware that the Government's response to COVID-19 is constantly evolving, and we will regularly review Guide to reflect this. We will undertake a full review of the Guide by no later than 30 June 2022, and every six months thereafter.

Our bottom lines

- We never compromise our health, safety and wellbeing at work