



Mandatory Vaccination Order for Psychologists – FAQ's

On October 11, the Government announced that it was revising legislation to make COVID-19 vaccination compulsory for 'high risk' workers in the health and disability sectors. The Order that makes these changes has now been passed and is broader in scope than was originally signalled.

This Order legally came into effect at 11:59pm on October 25, and requires every psychologist to:

- **receive their first vaccine dose by 15 November 2021;** and
- **be fully vaccinated by 1 January 2022.**

These dates replace the deadlines initially announced by the COVID-19 Response Minister on October 11.

The COVID-19 Response Minister has also now announced specific requirements for staff and people who work in prison settings, including health practitioners. Earlier deadlines of **6 November** (for dose 1) and **8 December 2021** (for full vaccination) apply to this group. For psychologists, these dates apply only to being able to work in corrections facilities and/or with prisoners; the dates above will apply to your work in other areas. If your practice involves working both inside and outside prisons, or with prisoners outside such facilities, we recommend you talk to your employer(s) or contracting agency as soon as possible to clarify the requirements that apply to you.

What if I believe I should be exempted from these requirements?

An exemption process will come into force on 15 November. Psychologists may be exempt from the requirement to be vaccinated if, after examination, a suitably qualified health practitioner considers that particular physical or other needs would make it inappropriate for the person to be vaccinated. There is very little other detail on this exemption process so far. The expectation is that it will require a medical or nurse practitioner opinion that there are medical contra-indications to the vaccine. There has been an exemption process in place for Border workers, and that has resulted in only very few exemptions being granted.

Does this Order cover all psychologists?

Yes. The original announcement referred to the Order covering only some work settings. Cabinet has now decided that all regulated health practitioners, no matter where they work, should be covered by the Order.

Psychology is a profession regulated under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003, and so every psychologist is required to receive their vaccinations by the above

dates. This includes psychologists who do not deal directly with patients, clients, or consumers, or who do not practice in face-to-face/ kanohi-ki-te-kanohi settings. For example, the Order does apply to psychologists working in telehealth.

I don't work for a DHB; does this Order apply to me?

Yes. The Order applies whether or not you are working in the public health system, a for-profit company, or a charity or other non-government organisation. It also applies if you are self-employed.

I don't work in a clinical role; does this Order apply to me?

Yes. The Order covers all regulated health practitioners no matter what setting they work in. The Ministry of Health has confirmed that this includes non-clinical roles and areas such as psychology management, psychology policy and professional advice, and research.

I plan to only work by telehealth, or only do pro-bono or voluntary work, does this Order apply to me?

Yes. You will not be permitted to do any work, whether that is in person or by telehealth, paid or unpaid, if you have not complied with the Order.

I'm not currently working as a psychologist; does this Order apply to me?

The Board understands that this Order only applies if you are actively practising as a psychologist. For example, if you are currently taking a break from psychology and working in another job the Order will not cover you as a psychologist, unless the other job also falls under the Order. If the other job involves working in a health care or education setting, even if you are not working as a psychologist, the other role is likely to be subject to the Order.

If you are unsure whether or not the Order is likely to apply to you, talk to your employer, union, or professional association, or contact the Ministry of Health.

What happens if I breach the mandatory vaccination Order?

This Order has legal authority, and legislation sets down specific penalties for not complying. This will also have implications for your current employment.

The Board expects psychologists to comply with legislation. Failing to observe this order may be grounds for a formal complaint, and lead to disciplinary proceedings under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003.

How is the New Zealand Psychologists Board involved in this Order?

This Order has been put in place by the Government, not the Board.

The Board has no role in monitoring psychologists' vaccination status and is not involved in directly investigating or enforcing compliance with this Order. Doing so is the responsibility

of your employer, the Ministry of Health, and other agencies. However, as noted above, non-compliance with this order may be grounds for a complaint. This would be investigated in the same way as any other complaint or conviction that is referred to the Board.

I'd like to know more about this Order

[Ministry of Health Covid-19 Mandatory vaccinations](#)

[Health & Disability Worker Vaccinations Order – guidance document](#)

[The Order](#)

For further information about how this Order might affect your practice or your workplace, talk to your employer.

For further information about the Order itself, contact the Ministry of Health or see their website at www.health.govt.nz

Is there anything else I need to know?

The Board firmly believes that vaccination is a critical part of Aotearoa New Zealand's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Getting your COVID-19 vaccination not only helps protect yourself, but also your clients, your whānau, and the wider community. We strongly recommend that all psychologists take up the opportunity to be vaccinated unless there are clear medical reasons not to do so.