



Working in aged care in New Zealand





Tip Helpful hints.



Advice Things you need to know.

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How can this guide help me?

This guide has information to prepare you for working in New Zealand's aged care sector.

This guide is for people who work or want to work in New Zealand's aged care sector as support workers, caregivers or health care professionals.

The New Zealand aged care sector values migrant aged care workers. No matter how long you stay in New Zealand, we want you to enjoy your time working here.

Because it can take time to get used to living and working in a new country, it is important that you and your family have the information and support you need, even if you are here on a temporary visa.

Working in aged care in New Zealand may be different from what you are used to. Caring for and communicating with older people may be different from your home country. How people communicate at work will be different too.

This guide will help you understand what it is like to work in aged care in New Zealand and where to get advice and support if you need it. It also explains some of the differences you may experience living in New Zealand.



1. Introduction

Working in aged care in New Zealand may be different from what you are used to. Learn about the differences.

New Zealand's aged care sector

New Zealand's population is ageing. By 2036, around 23 per cent of the total population will be aged 65 or over, compared to 14 per cent in 2013. By 2051, the number of older people with a disability is expected to grow by 60 per cent.¹

Many older people live independently in their own homes for the whole of their lives. People who need extra care or support can receive this either in their private home or in a retirement village, rest home, hospital or respite facility.

Assistance to live independently may be provided by family, friends, community groups or paid workers. Many older people have their care needs (including personal care) provided by paid workers.

¹ Statistics New Zealand (2007); Hot off the press (2006) New Zealand Disability Survey.



Some New Zealand aged care facilities allow residents to keep pets or visitors to bring pets.

New Zealand data shows that, as at January 2018:

- › around 16,000 staff were working in in-home care
- › around 22,000 caregivers and 5,000 nurses were working in aged residential care facilities.

There are 33,000 caregivers currently employed in aged care in New Zealand. Between 12,000 and 20,000 more residents will need aged residential care by 2026. Demand for workers is expected to increase by between 50% and 75% (full time equivalents) by 2026.²

About working in aged care in New Zealand

Aged care in New Zealand may be different from what you are used to. Because of this, you may need to complete extra training, learn new ways of working or gain further qualifications.

2. Grant Thornton aged residential care service review (2010)

How we support older people

Aged care in New Zealand is about enabling older people to live with confidence and to participate in society for as long as they can.

The following table has some examples of the types of support you might be asked to provide as an aged care worker in New Zealand.

Support with...	Examples
wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Looking for and reporting changes in wellbeing › Assisting with medication › Assisting with medical procedures and tests or physical therapy › Helping with rehabilitation after surgery, injury or illness › Respite care (to give family carers a break) › Palliative care (caring for someone who does not have long to live)
mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Providing strength and balance exercise support › Moving or lifting people with limited mobility, including using special equipment
personal care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Showering, toileting, cleaning teeth, brushing hair, shaving, cutting toenails › Dressing and undressing
daily activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Preparing meals and help with eating › House cleaning (vacuuming, cleaning kitchen and bathroom floors and surfaces, washing and hanging out clothes) › Shopping

Working with people from different backgrounds

New Zealand's ageing population is becoming more diverse.

The number of older Māori, Pacific and Asian people is increasing steadily. Depending on which region of New Zealand you work in, you may be caring for people from different cultures and/or countries.

Learning and understanding how to best care for people with different cultural backgrounds will be an important part of your job. Your workplace may have some practices that relate specifically to Māori or Pacific cultures. Your employer may provide training about how to communicate with and care for people of different cultures.

Most older people in New Zealand are grateful for the help and support their caregivers provide. However, for some it is difficult to understand different accents or perceived cultural differences. This can be due to a health condition, such as hearing loss or dementia.



Staying professional

It is important to show respect and stay professional when working with older people. If you have questions about how to maintain professional boundaries, or you need support in this area, you can talk to your employer or supervisor. You can also contact your union or one of the employment authorities listed later in section 3 of this guide.

The rights of older people in New Zealand

Older people rely on their caregivers to treat them well. Like all New Zealanders, they are also entitled to have their privacy and personal information protected.

The rights of older people to good health care, good residential aged care and privacy are protected by New Zealand law and codes of rights.

New Zealand's Health and Disability Commissioner looks into complaints about health related services, including aged care.

Visit: [hdc.org.nz](https://www.hdc.org.nz)

The Privacy Commissioner looks into complaints about actual or potential breaches of privacy.

Visit: [privacy.org.nz](https://www.privacy.org.nz)

Qualifications and registration

Using overseas qualifications in New Zealand

If you intend to use your overseas qualification to get a job in aged care in New Zealand, check that your qualification is recognised by the sector. For roles that are listed on Immigration New Zealand's Long term skill shortage list, eg Registered nurse (Aged Care), your qualification must be comparable to the standard of the New Zealand qualification on the skill shortage list.

You will need to have your overseas qualification assessed by Qualifications Recognition Services (QRS) at the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) to see if it aligns with the New Zealand Qualifications Framework (NZQF).

Visit: [skillsshortages.immigration.govt.nz](https://www.skillsshortages.immigration.govt.nz)

For more information about recognition of overseas qualifications visit: bit.ly/nzqa_2

For more information about the International Qualifications Assessment visit: bit.ly/nzqa_1



New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) assessment

NZQA assessment is different from Immigration New Zealand recognition for residence visa applications.

Recognition of a qualification by Immigration New Zealand as part of applying for a residence visa is not the same as NZQA assessing whether your overseas qualification aligns with the New Zealand Qualifications Framework. Both may be required.

Internationally registered health professionals

New Zealand law requires nurses, physiotherapists and occupational therapists to be registered with a professional body or council in New Zealand before they can work in those roles in New Zealand. Even if you are already registered overseas, you must show evidence that you hold New Zealand registration before you can apply for a work or residence visa. You will also need a current practising certificate.

Requirements for registration

If you are applying for registration as a nurse, physiotherapist or occupational therapist, you must provide evidence that you:

- › have an international qualification equivalent to the one in New Zealand
- › are competent to practise within your scope of practice
- › meet registration requirements, including the ability to communicate effectively in English for the purpose of your role.

Applicants from countries other than Australia are required to sit an English language assessment before making an application.

Visit: immigration.govt.nz/occupationalregistration



Who to contact

If you are registered overseas and you wish to work as a:

- › nurse, contact the Nursing Council of New Zealand.

Visit:

nursingcouncil.org.nz/Nurses/International-registration

- › occupational therapist, contact the Occupational Therapy Board of New Zealand.

Visit: otboard.org.nz/immigrant

- › physiotherapist, contact the Physiotherapy Board of New Zealand.

Visit: physioboard.org.nz



Advice from the Nursing Council of New Zealand

The Nursing Council of New Zealand strongly recommends that you do not make plans to move to New Zealand until you have completed registration or have been advised to complete a Competence Assessment Programme (CAP) and have a placement on the programme, if needed.

Getting New Zealand training for aged care work

If you need training, you may wish to discuss support for your training needs with your employer. You may be able to strengthen or formalise your existing skills, either through an in-house training programme or through external aged care training.

Under the 2017 Care and Support Workers (Pay Equity) Settlement Agreement, employers are required to enable workers to gain formal NZQA qualifications within required timeframes.

Visit: health.govt.nz/payequity

Industry Training Organisations

Industry Training Organisations (ITOs) are part of a formal system for increasing and developing skills in the workplace. ITOs arrange training and set qualification standards, and work with the industry to determine skill development needs. Health and safety training is included within ITO training programmes.

Careerforce is the ITO for New Zealand's health and community support services, including aged care.

Visit: careerforce.org.nz/our_sectors/aged-care

Other training providers

Private training establishments (PTEs) also provide training for aged care work, from entry level up to post-graduate level. PTEs must be registered with NZQA and meet national standards.

Visit: careers.govt.nz/courses and type in "aged care" (or tick the Study Field 'Health').



Discuss training options with your employer

Speak to your employer if you think you need more training in any aspect of your work.

Working conditions in aged care

Wages

In December 2019:

- › the **median** hourly rate for registered nurses in aged care was \$30
- › the minimum hourly rate for care and support workers was \$20.50. This rate was agreed to as part of the 2017 Care and Support Worker Settlement.

Wage rates can also increase based on your length of service or after you gain recognised qualifications.

Visit: health.govt.nz/payequity

Hours of work and other conditions

As an aged care worker in New Zealand, you can either work part time or full time. The same work rights apply whether you work full or part time.

Different hours of employment in New Zealand	
Full time	Usually between 30 and 40 hours a week with guaranteed hours.
Part time	Usually between 10 and 15 hours a week, but can be up to 30 hours a week with guaranteed hours.
Casual	Casual workers are employed as and when required and do not have regular or guaranteed hours of work. Work is offered when available and there is no requirement to accept work when offered.

For more information visit:

employment.govt.nz/types-of-employee



Working in a residential rest home, retirement village or hospital

Rest homes, retirement villages and hospitals usually provide a 24/7 service (24 hours a day, 7 days a week). Length of shifts can vary.

Working as a home care worker employed by an organisation

Most home care workers visit the homes of older people and provide support to help them in their home.

- › The hours of work are usually between 6am and 8pm Monday to Friday. Weekend work is also available.
- › Hours worked may be part time. Part-time workers will be offered guaranteed hours of work, which may increase over time.
- › Home care workers need their own place to live and access to an insured vehicle.
- › You must have a New Zealand driver licence.

Employers pay your travel costs between places of work.

Visit: [health.govt.nz/ibtravel](https://www.health.govt.nz/ibtravel)

Working as a home-based care worker employed by the client or their family

Some older people pay for care workers to live with and care for them in their own homes.

If you are a home-based care worker, make sure you know:

- › what you are expected to do
- › how you will be paid
- › what your work rights are.

Your rights relating to your working hours and your other minimum employment rights are explained in more detail in the next section

Minimum employment rights.





2. Minimum employment rights

New Zealand has laws that protect all workers. Know your rights to ensure you are paid and treated fairly.

As an employee in New Zealand you have minimum employment rights. These include:

- › minimum wages
- › working hours
- › holidays
- › leave and breaks.

Your employer must treat you fairly and provide you with a written employment agreement outlining what you are entitled to.

Knowing your rights will help you to settle into the workplace and avoid any potential disagreements with your employer.



Fair process

- › You are entitled to seek independent advice before signing your employment agreement.
- › Your employer cannot take any action against you without a genuine or valid reason. If they believe they have a valid reason, they must work with you in good faith and follow a fair process. You are entitled to seek independent advice and have a support person present when meeting with your employer.

Visit: [employment.govt.nz/fair-process](https://www.employment.govt.nz/fair-process)



Available in 14 languages

Information on your minimum employment rights is available in 14 languages.

Visit: [employment.govt.nz/translations](https://www.employment.govt.nz/translations)



All employees are entitled to the minimum employment rights.



Try Employment New Zealand's learning modules

The Employment New Zealand website has a lot of useful information about employee rights, including free employee learning modules. Look at these modules to learn about your rights and obligations. It is important that you find out things you may not be aware of. The modules include links to supporting information if you need it and are available in English, Samoan, Simplified Chinese, Hindi, Korean and Tagalog.

Visit: employment.elearning.ac.nz

Right to join a union

In New Zealand, you have the right to join a union.

Unions support employees in the workplace. They bargain for collective employment agreements with employers and help employees with information and advice about work-related issues.



Taking part in union activities

Your employer cannot discriminate against you or disadvantage you for joining a union or taking part in legitimate union activities.

The following unions represent aged care workers:

- › **E tū:** etu.nz
- › **New Zealand Nurses Organisation:** nzno.org.nz
- › **Public Service Association:** psa.org.nz



Union Network of Migrants (UNEMIG)

UNEMIG is a migrant led, non-profit and non-sectarian network of migrant workers that aims to protect the rights and welfare of migrant workers in New Zealand.

Visit: unemig.org.nz

Employment agreements

Your employer must provide you with a written employment agreement stating your hours of work, what you will be paid, the leave you are entitled to, and any other conditions that you and your employer have agreed to.

If you and your employer later agree to any changes to your original employment agreement, for example hours of work, they must be recorded as a written variation to your employment agreement.

You can have an individual agreement or be part of a collective agreement.

Individual agreements

If you do not belong to a union, you will need an individual agreement between you and your employer. You must both sign the agreement.

Before you sign your agreement, read it and make sure you understand it. Your employer must give you time to read it and get advice if you need any. You can discuss and agree any changes with your employer before you sign. You can have a representative or support person with you when you do this.

You are entitled to a copy of the signed agreement. If your employer does not give you a copy, ask for one. Keep the signed copy in a safe place in case there is a disagreement later on.

Collective agreements

In New Zealand many employers in the aged care sector who hire migrant workers have collective agreements with independent trade unions. A collective agreement is an agreement worked out between a union (on behalf of the workers) and your employer.

Your employer must let you know if there is a collective agreement and how to contact and join the union that negotiates the collective agreement. If you belong to a union and there is a collective agreement, you will be automatically covered by that agreement. If you agree to any conditions that are different from the collective agreement, these should be outlined in a variation of contract or in a letter of appointment.

For more information visit:

[employment.govt.nz/employment-agreements](https://www.employment.govt.nz/employment-agreements)



Your hours of work should be stated in your employment agreement.

Working hours

Your hours of work must be agreed to by you and your employer and recorded in your signed employment agreement. Any other arrangements relating to your hours of work, for example flexible working hours and compensation for overtime, must also be recorded in your signed employment agreement.



Your rights

- › Your employer must pay you at least the minimum wage for all the time that you work.
- › Your employer cannot change your hours, days or times of work without your written agreement (unless you are a casual worker).
- › Your employer cannot make you work more hours than you have agreed to in your employment agreement or a variation to it.

It is important to read all about your rights regarding hours of work.

Visit: [employment.govt.nz/hours-of-work](https://www.employment.govt.nz/hours-of-work)



Workers on temporary work visas

If you are on a temporary work visa you must be paid for at least 30 hours a week and this must be written into your employment agreement.

Flexible work arrangements

You have the right to request a change to your working arrangements. For example, you may need more time at home to care for your family. You can ask to change:

- › the days you work
- › the hours you work
- › your place or work.

Your employer must consider the request fairly. Make sure you get agreed changes in writing.

For more information visit: employment.govt.nz/flexible-work

90 day trial period

When you start working, if your employer employs **fewer than 20 people** they may offer you a trial period of up to 90 days.

If you agree to a trial period:

- › your employer must pay you during the trial period
- › the details must be recorded in your signed employment agreement.

If your employer dismisses you from your job during the 90 day trial period, you cannot make a legal complaint against them for unjustified dismissal.

You **can** make a legal complaint against your employer for other reasons, for example, harassment, exploitation and discrimination. These terms are explained later in this guide.

All other minimum employment rights apply while you are on a trial period.

For more information visit: employment.govt.nz/trial-and-probationary-periods

Minimum pay and deductions

Pay

If you are aged 16 years or over, your employer must pay you at least the minimum hourly wage for every hour you work. The minimum wage is set by the government and reviewed each year.

Your employer must pay you in money, either into your bank account or with cash.

The minimum pay for aged care workers is subject to the 2017 Pay equity settlement.

To see the current minimum wage rates visit:

employment.govt.nz/minimum-wage-rates

For information on the Care and support workers pay equity settlement visit: health.govt.nz/payequity

Deductions

Your employer must not charge you fees or take out (deduct) money from your wages, unless they are required by law or you have agreed in writing first.

Deductions allowed by law include:

- › pay-as-you-earn (PAYE) income tax
- › ACC levies
- › student loan repayments
- › agreed KiwiSaver payments
- › child support payments
- › deductions ordered by a court.

For more information on the minimum wage and deductions visit: employment.govt.nz/pay

IRD (tax) numbers

Before you begin work you need an Inland Revenue (IRD) number so your income is not taxed any higher or lower than it should be. It is free to get an IRD number from the Inland Revenue website.

To get an IRD number visit: ird.govt.nz/roles/employees

KiwiSaver

KiwiSaver is a voluntary, work-based savings scheme to help New Zealanders save for their retirement.

- › You must be **eligible** to join KiwiSaver.
- › Workers who join have a percentage of their wages paid into the scheme each pay day.
- › If you join KiwiSaver your employer must also contribute an amount equal to 3% of your wages.
- › The New Zealand government may also contribute a member tax credit once a year.



Check if you can join KiwiSaver

- › Not all visa holders can join KiwiSaver. For example, temporary visa holders are **not eligible** to join.
- › If you are **eligible** to join, you will be automatically enrolled into a KiwiSaver scheme when you start a new job. You can join the same scheme that your employer uses, or choose from a range of other schemes.
- › If you do not wish to join KiwiSaver, you have eight weeks to “opt out” (let your employer know you do not want to join).

Visit: kiwisaver.govt.nz



All workers are entitled to set rest and meal breaks.

Breaks

Working in aged care can involve physical work and shift work. Regular breaks help you to stay fresh and alert and avoid workplace accidents. They also allow time to rest, refresh and take care of any personal matters.

All workers are entitled to set rest and meal breaks. The number and length depends on how many hours you work. The minimum length of breaks required by law is 10 minutes for rest breaks and 30 minutes for meal breaks.

Your employer does not have to pay you for your meal breaks but rest breaks are paid time.

For more information, including a table showing minimum rest and meal breaks, visit:

[employment.govt.nz/rest-and-meal-breaks](https://www.employment.govt.nz/rest-and-meal-breaks)



Working during a scheduled break

From time to time, your employer may require you to work during a scheduled break. For example, if there is an emergency situation to deal with or if there is no one to relieve you. If this happens, you must be allowed a break at a quieter time.

Public holidays

Public holidays (also known as ‘statutory holidays’) are holidays that all workers are entitled to in addition to their annual leave. New Zealand has 11 public holidays.

Rules about public holidays and your entitlements

The following table has some of the rules about public holidays and what you are entitled to.

If...	then...
a public holiday is on a day you would normally work	you are usually entitled to have the day off and still be paid for it
you and your employer agree you will work on a public holiday	you are entitled to be paid at least one and a half times your usual pay rate (‘time and a half’) for the hours you work on that day
you agree to work on a public holiday and it is a day you would normally work	you are entitled to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > be paid time and a half, and > take another day off on full pay (an ‘alternative day’ or a ‘day in lieu’)
a public holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday and you do not normally work on those days	you usually get a paid holiday on the following Monday or Tuesday instead. This is called ‘Mondayisation’

Transferring a public holiday

You can ask to transfer a public holiday to another working day. For example, you may wish to celebrate a religious or cultural holiday that is not a New Zealand public holiday.

Your employer must consider the request fairly. Your employer can also ask you to transfer a public holiday to another day to meet the needs of the business.

Any agreement to transfer a public holiday must be in writing.

For more information visit: [employment.govt.nz/public-holidays](https://www.employment.govt.nz/public-holidays)



All workers are entitled to New Zealand's public holidays, as well as annual leave.

Types of leave

Annual leave

All workers with predictable work patterns are entitled to at least four weeks of paid holidays a year after working for their employer for 12 months. Most employers will let you take annual leave as you earn it. You can take at least two weeks off at a time.

If you work **part time**, you get four weeks of annual leave based on what a working week is for you. For example, if you work three days a week you will be entitled to 12 days of annual leave.

- › You and your employer must agree on when you will take your leave.
- › Your employer can require you to take annual leave but must give you fair notice and the chance to discuss it with them first.
- › Your employer cannot make you exchange your annual leave for money.
- › Your employer must pay you the holiday pay you have earned but not yet taken when your employment ends.
- › Your employer must show your holiday pay as a separate amount on your payslip.

For more information visit:

[employment.govt.nz/annual-holidays](https://www.employment.govt.nz/annual-holidays)



Work with your employer when planning leave

- › It is a good idea to have written confirmation from your employer before you finalise arrangements for leave that are difficult or expensive to change or cancel.
- › Let your employer know if you plan to be overseas during your annual leave so they can contact you if needed.
- › If you are on annual leave and you need to stay away longer than planned, you must get your employer's approval first. For example, if you have a family emergency to deal with. If you do not get prior approval, you could put your employment at risk.



Casual workers

Depending on their pattern of work, **casual** workers may be entitled to either four weeks' annual leave or 'pay-as-you-go' annual holiday pay (8% of their gross earnings as holiday pay on top of their wages).

- › If the pattern of your work hours is predictable you are entitled to four weeks' annual leave.
- › If your pattern of work hours is unpredictable you may agree to be paid annual holiday pay with your pay. This is called 'pay as you go' for fixed term or changing work patterns.

Visit: [employment.govt.nz/types-of-employee](https://www.employment.govt.nz/types-of-employee)

Sick leave

All workers are entitled to at least five days of paid sick leave each year after being employed in the same job for six months.

Check your employment agreement to find out what you are entitled to.

You can request sick leave when:

- › you are sick or injured
- › you need to look after someone who depends on you because they are sick or injured. For example, your husband or wife, partner, child or elderly parent.

The New Zealand Holidays Act allows you to carry over unused sick leave to the next year, up to a maximum of 20 days. Your employer may allow you to carry over more than 20 days.

Medical certificates

You are not required to get a medical certificate for sick leave, but your employer may ask you for one. The certificate should state that you are unfit for work but not the reason why. If the sick leave is for **less than three days** your employer must reimburse you (pay you back) for the costs of getting a medical certificate. For three days or more, you may have to pay the costs.

For more information on sick leave visit:

[employment.govt.nz/sick-leave](https://www.employment.govt.nz/sick-leave)



Talk to your employer if you have questions about sick leave

If you need to take sick leave before you have worked six months, or you are unsure if you have enough sick leave available, talk to your employer about your options.

Bereavement leave

All workers are entitled to paid bereavement leave after being employed in the same job for six months. Collective agreements generally have bereavement leave available from the start of employment.

The amount of leave you are entitled to must be recorded in your employment agreement.

Bereavement leave entitlements

The following table shows the **minimum** entitlements for bereavement leave. Check your employment agreement to find out exactly what you are entitled to.

If...	you are entitled to...
a member of your immediate family dies who is your: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › husband, wife, civil union or de facto partner › child or grandchild › brother or sister › parent or grandparent › husband, wife or partner's parent 	3 days
more than one family member dies at the same time	3 days for each person
someone outside your immediate family dies	up to 1 day

If you request bereavement leave for someone outside your close family, your employer needs to agree that you have a close relationship with that person and/or responsibilities relating to the death, eg cultural and/or supportive responsibilities.

For more information visit:

[employment.govt.nz/bereavement-leave](https://www.employment.govt.nz/bereavement-leave)



Talk to your employer if you have questions about bereavement leave

When close family or friends die it may be very difficult for you if you are living far away. If you need to take bereavement leave and are unsure if you have enough available, talk to your employer about your options.

Parental leave

If you have a new baby or child to care for you may be eligible for paid parental leave and up to one year of unpaid extended leave, if you are the primary carer.

The parental leave payment is a weekly payment for one continuous period of up to 22 weeks.

You should not be disadvantaged in your work for taking paid or unpaid leave that you are entitled to.

For more information visit: employment.govt.nz/parental-leave

Domestic violence leave

Workers affected by domestic or family violence have the right to:

- › up to 10 days paid domestic violence leave per year
- › ask for short-term flexible working arrangements for up to two months.

Domestic or family violence means all forms of violence in family and intimate relationships. Domestic violence can be physical, sexual or psychological abuse.

Domestic violence rights apply even if the domestic violence happened in the past. Employers must not treat workers badly or unfairly for experiencing domestic violence.



Who qualifies for domestic violence leave?

Workers qualify for domestic violence leave if they have worked for their employer for at least six months and meet other criteria around the hours they have worked.

Employers may ask for some form of written proof, like a letter from a support person or organisation, a report from your doctor or court documents.

For more information on domestic violence visit:
employment.govt.nz/domestic-violence-leave



Leave summary

You are entitled to:

- › at least 4 weeks' paid holiday each year
- › New Zealand's public (statutory) holidays
- › at least 5 days' paid sick leave each year
- › bereavement leave
- › parental leave, if you are eligible
- › domestic violence leave, if you are affected.

Your employment record and payslips

Your employer must keep full and accurate records to show that they have given you all your minimum employment entitlements. These records must include your:

- › hourly pay rate
- › hours worked and what you were paid
- › holiday and leave information (including leave taken and leave balance).

Your employer does not have to provide you with a payslip, unless this is stated in your employment agreement. But they do have to give you a written breakdown of how your pay is made up, if you ask for it.

If you do not understand something on your employment record or payslip, you can ask your employer to explain it to you.

For more information visit:
employment.govt.nz/payslip
employment.govt.nz/keeping-accurate-records

Your privacy

Your employer can only collect personal information about you for valid work purposes or where directed to by the law. They must protect the privacy of your personal information and not disclose or use it for any other purpose.

You can ask your employer for access to your personal file and other information they have about you. They must either give you access or tell you why you cannot see it. They must respond to your request as soon as possible and within 20 working days (or ask for an extension). You can also ask for information to be corrected if it is not accurate.

For more information visit: [employment.govt.nz/privacy](https://www.employment.govt.nz/privacy)



3. Protecting yourself from exploitation

Workplace exploitation is a serious crime in New Zealand. Learn what support is available.

If you are a migrant worker you have the same rights as New Zealand workers and it is a crime for employers to exploit you. Your employer cannot take away your employment rights.

Most New Zealand employers do not exploit their workers but a small number may take advantage of people who are not familiar with their minimum employment rights.

You can find helpful information on the Immigration New Zealand website, including examples of exploitation, what to do if your employer exploits you and ways to keep yourself safe.

For more information visit: immigration.govt.nz/exploitation

Ways to get help

If you think you are being exploited, support is available. It is important to get help as soon as possible.



Here are some things you can do if you think your employer is exploiting you

- › Make a note of the incidents that offend you.
- › Talk about it with someone you trust. They may be able to help you or direct you to someone who can.
- › Discuss it with your union delegate.
- › Use the free mediation service offered by MBIE. A mediator can help you and your employer resolve the problem.



Who to contact for free help and advice

Who to contact	Help they can provide	How to get help
The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE)	Confidential help and advice on employment issues, pay and holidays	Call the Contact Centre: 0800 20 90 20
MBIE Mediation service	Help to resolve a dispute with your employer	employment.govt.nz/mediation
NZ Police	If you think you are a victim of migrant exploitation you can contact the New Zealand Police	police.govt.nz/contact Call 105 for non-emergencies If you are in immediate physical danger, call 111 and ask for Police
Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)	Advice on dealing with complaints and disputes This service is for everyone, not just New Zealand citizens	cab.org.nz/find-a-cab Call: 0800 367 222
Community Law	Free legal advice, if you are eligible	communitylaw.org.nz/free-legal-help
Unions	Help with exploitation and getting fair treatment Unions can also negotiate with your employer on your behalf	etu.nz nzno.org.nz psa.org.nz

Employee Assistance Programme

Some workplaces have an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

EAP is a **free** service where you can talk to an independent professional counsellor in private about problems you are facing. You can get advice on many issues, including:

- › employment
- › health and safety at work
- › personal health issues
- › budgeting
- › legal issues.

EAP is completely confidential. There is no need to tell your supervisor or employer if you are receiving this service.

Contact your workplace human resources (HR) team to find out if your workplace provides this service.

Visit: bit.ly/eap_assistance

The role of employment authorities

There are several organisations that oversee employment standards in New Zealand. We call them employment authorities.

There are three main employment authorities:

- › Labour Inspectorate
- › Employment Relations Authority (ERA)
- › Employment Court.

The New Zealand employment authorities are here to help you. Do not be afraid to report a complaint to these authorities, even if you are worried about your immigration status. Immigration New Zealand and the Labour Inspectorate will treat you fairly.

The Labour Inspectorate

The Labour Inspectorate has a team of inspectors that visit New Zealand businesses to make sure their owners are providing the minimum employment rights to their employees.

For more information visit:

employment.govt.nz/labour-inspectorate

Employment Relations Authority (ERA)

The ERA helps to put right employment relationship problems. Examples of issues they can help with include:

- › unpaid wages
- › employers who fail to meet the terms of an employment agreement
- › unjustified dismissal (being dismissed for no good reason).

For more information visit: era.govt.nz

Employment Court

The most serious employment disputes go to the Employment Court. This can happen if someone does not agree with what the ERA determines.

For more information visit: employmentcourt.govt.nz



4. Health and safety

Keeping healthy and safe at work is everyone's responsibility.

Your health and safety rights

Under New Zealand law, you have the right to:

- › work in a place where risks to health and safety are managed
- › adequate facilities at work, for example toilets, washing facilities and first aid equipment
- › free protective equipment, for example disposable gloves
- › safety training, information and support
- › have your say on health and safety issues and decisions
- › ask for a workplace safety representative or a health and safety group
- › refuse to do work that puts you or others at risk.



You can have your say on health and safety decisions

It is against the law for anyone to treat you differently or take steps against you for being concerned about workplace health and safety.

Everyone is responsible for health and safety

Your employer must..

- › look after your health and safety and provide a healthy and safe workplace
- › give you the training, supervision and equipment that you need to do your job safely
- › tell you how to raise concerns or suggestions about staying healthy and safe at work

All workers must..

- › know the health and safety procedures and how to keep themselves and those around them healthy and safe
- › follow health and safety instructions carefully and wear or use the safety equipment provided
- › report all accidents and near misses



Someone should show you how to use safety equipment.

Keeping you healthy and safe

Some of the things your employer must do to keep you healthy and safe include:

- › give you health and safety information when you start your job
- › tell you about workplace risks and how they are managed to reduce harm
- › give you personal protective equipment and show you how to use it
- › explain what to do in a medical emergency or other unexpected event
- › show you where emergency equipment and first aid kits are kept
- › tell you how to manage risk and report hazards and accidents, including a 'near miss'
- › explain how to raise concerns and make suggestions about workplace health and safety.



What is a 'near miss'?

A 'near miss' is an event that could have caused injury but did not.



Hazards in the aged care workplace

Know the dangers

There can be lots of hazards in the aged care workplace. The following table has some of the hazards you should be aware of.

Activities and equipment	Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Slips, trips and falls › Lifting and moving people › Using equipment incorrectly (eg hoists, wheelchairs) › Repetitive movements › Electrical cords › Cleaning products › Medications › Sharp equipment, eg needles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Wet floors › Infections › Violent or aggressive behaviour (eg due to dementia) › Hazards in people's homes (eg secondhand smoke, handling unsafe food, pets) › Working long hours › Working alone at night › Going home after dark

The level of risk from these hazards will vary depending on the individual workplace. Be sure to ask what the most important risks are for you. Your manager or supervisor should identify the top risks in your work and what you must do to keep healthy and safe.



STAYING SAFE AT WORK

Drugs and alcohol

Using drugs or alcohol while at work can put you and others at risk. Drugs and alcohol can cause poor concentration, carelessness, risk-taking behaviour and errors in judgement and can result in injuries, fatalities and absence from work. They can also affect work performance and productivity.

Employers may have policies and processes to manage and prevent the risks of drugs and alcohol in the workplace. They may also use pre-employment testing when employing workers in safety sensitive workplaces, or require employees to take alcohol or drug tests if this is part of the worker's employment agreement.

Visit: employment.govt.nz/drugs-alcohol-and-work

Fatigue

Fatigue is a state of physical and/or mental exhaustion. It can reduce your ability to perform work safely and can lead to workplace accidents and injuries. Causes of fatigue include long or irregular work hours, night work, physically demanding work and loud noise.

Visit: worksafe.govt.nz/fatigue-quick-guide

Report workplace hazards

Make sure you report all workplace hazards and accidents, including near misses. Reporting dangers and suggesting safety ideas helps keep everyone healthy and safe.

If you have a suggestion or concern, but do not feel comfortable raising it at work, you can:

- › talk to your Health and Safety representative if you have one
- › ask a workmate to raise an issue for you
- › contact a union delegate if you have one.

If you do not have enough information or training to do a task safely, talk to your employer or supervisor immediately.

Use the protective clothing and equipment provided

Your employer must give you personal protective equipment (PPE), including protective clothing, to do your work safely. What they give you will depend on the tasks you are expected to do. All workers must use the protective clothing and equipment provided to them.

Health and safety support

WorkSafe regulates health and safety in New Zealand workplaces and monitors and enforces compliance with health and safety law.

Visit: [worksafe.govt.nz/health-service-risks](https://www.worksafe.govt.nz/health-service-risks)

The Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) provides tools for staying healthy and safe at work, including information and advice for healthcare workers on how to prevent injuries in the workplace.

Visit: goo.gl/VGD7PF



Call WorkSafe if you are worried about an unsafe or unhealthy work situation

You can contact WorkSafe by phone on **0800 030 040** (24 hours). Your concerns will be treated confidentially. (Ask for Ezispeak if you need an interpreter.)

WorkSafe also has information to help you deal with sexual harassment and bullying in the workplace.

Visit: [worksafe.govt.nz/sexual-harassment](https://www.worksafe.govt.nz/sexual-harassment)



Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

EAP services can help you resolve health and safety issues. Contact your workplace human resources (HR) team to find out if your workplace provides this service.

Visit: bit.ly/eap_assistance





INJURIES AT WORK – ACC

New Zealand has an accident compensation scheme called “ACC”. The scheme provides cover for personal injuries for everyone in New Zealand, including residents, visitors and migrant workers. ACC replaces the right to sue for personal injury. It is a blame free scheme, meaning it does not matter who caused the injury or where and when it happened.

If you are injured (at work, at home or anywhere in New Zealand) your injury is likely to be covered by ACC. You may be able to get help with costs like doctor’s fees and treatment.

If you are unable to work because of your injury, you may be able to get compensation for loss of earnings (weekly compensation) while you are off work. The amount you receive and when you start to receive it will depend on your particular situation.

All employees pay a levy (tax) to help fund the cost of the ACC scheme. The money is automatically taken out of your wages by your employer as part of your PAYE tax. The amount you pay depends on how much you earn and your individual levy rate.

Make sure you know what cover ACC can provide before you consider taking out income replacement insurance.

The ACC website has information on preventing injury and how to make a claim.

Visit: acc.co.nz



5. Workplace culture and communication

Learn how New Zealanders communicate and work together.

Some New Zealand workplaces can be quite informal. The way New Zealanders communicate at work may also be different from what you are used to.

Workplace culture

In New Zealand aged care workplaces, you may work with people from many different cultures. It will help if you understand some of the differences between New Zealanders and people from other countries.

Management and work style preferences

People from different countries often prefer to be managed in different ways. Some like to be told exactly what to do, others do not.

Compared to some migrant workers, New Zealanders are more likely to:

- › expect everyone to be treated fairly
- › make suggestions to their manager or supervisor
- › enjoy working without close supervision
- › expect to be asked to do a range of tasks
- › prefer to be left to do the job.



Fitting into the workplace

Knowing about the differences between cultures can help make it easier for you to fit into a new workplace. It can also help everyone work better as a team.

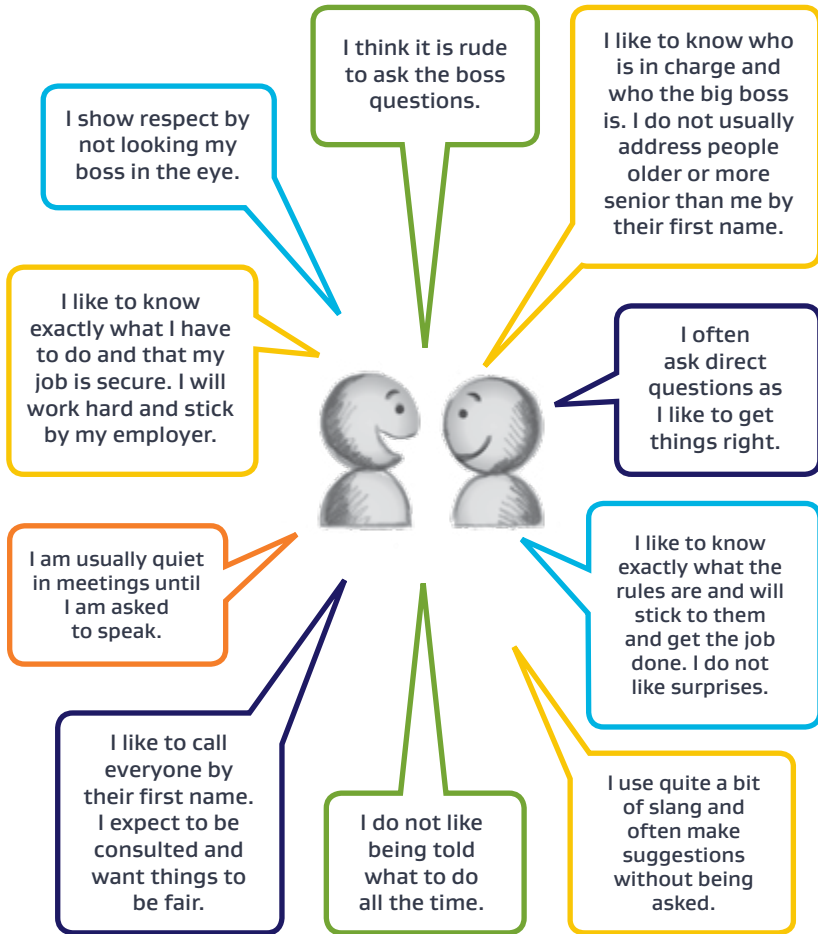


Workplace differences

Workers from different countries may also have different ways of working and talking with their workmates.

Here are some of the things that workers from different cultures say about how they work. How do you like to work?

How I like to work



Workplace communication

Keeping it clear

It is important that you are able to give clear instructions to other workers and can understand instructions you are given so you do not put yourself or others at risk of harm.

It is also important that you:

- › can be understood by those you care for
- › can understand what they say to you.

New Zealanders speak very fast and their accent is different from other English speakers. If you do not understand something, ask the person to speak more slowly and repeat it back to them to make sure you have understood correctly. Employers do not mind if you ask them to repeat an instruction many times as you need to make sure that you understand the instruction.

Visit: immigration.govt.nz/keepingitclear



Migrant workers need to give and receive clear instructions.



Speak more slowly if you need to

Some people may find it hard to understand your accent. Try to remember to speak more slowly if someone is having trouble understanding you.

Talking to the boss

In New Zealand, it is usually okay to speak to a supervisor or manager in a casual or informal way. It is not seen as disrespectful. Workers do not usually have to wait to be invited to speak.

It is also okay if you need to challenge or question instructions or complain about something, as long as you do it in a polite way and away from those you are caring for.

In New Zealand it is common for workers to call their boss by their first name. They usually do not mind.



Do not be shy to talk to your boss

If you are unsure how your boss likes to be spoken to, you could ask them or ask one of your workmates.



Most New Zealanders, even the boss, like to be called by their first name.



Try our WorkTalk tool

Our free online tool WorkTalk is designed to help improve communication in the workplace.

To try the tool visit: worktalk.immigration.govt.nz

Talking with your workmates

Being able to communicate well with your workmates helps you to work better as a team. It can also help you make friends. You will find it helpful if you take time to learn how the people in your team like to communicate with each other.



Small talk

In many New Zealand workplaces, people like to have some casual talk from time to time. This is called “chat” or “small talk”.

- › Workers will greet each other in the morning and chat about things like the weather, the news, sport, traffic, tv programmes etc.
- › Managers and supervisors will usually greet workers in the morning and chat with them from time to time too.

You will soon learn if this is okay in your workplace.

Talking with older people and their families

Here are a few tips on communicating with older people in New Zealand.

- › It is usually okay to call an older person by their first name but it is polite to check with them first.
- › Older people may sometimes find it hard to understand what you are saying if you have a strong accent. Try talking louder or slower, but do not shout as this can sound disrespectful.
- › If you need to do something for an older person, like dress them or give them an injection, it helps to let them know what you are going to do and check that they understand first.



Most older New Zealanders like to be called by their first name.



How New Zealanders make requests

New Zealanders often ask people to do things in an indirect way. When someone asks for something, it may sound like a suggestion. It is important to remember this when you are talking with your boss and the people you are caring for. Here are some examples:

- › “Would you mind getting me a drink?”
= **“Please get me a drink.”**
- › “Do you think you could move that chair?”
= **“Please move that chair.”**

Workplace language

Aged care jargon

Aged care workers in New Zealand may use some different technical terms (jargon) or other words that you are not used to. You may need to quickly learn some new terms. If you are not sure what something means, ask a workmate or your supervisor.

A few examples of New Zealand aged care jargon

Jargon	What does it mean?
ARC	Aged Residential Care
Flannel	Facecloth
Hoist	Equipment to lift or move residents (patients)
Jumper / Jersey	Sweater
Loo	Toilet
Resident	Patient / Client
Rest home	Care home / Nursing home / Care facility
Roster	Timetable or schedule showing work days and hours for each staff member
Singlet	Sleeveless, close fitting undershirt / Vest

The Eldernet website has a glossary of common aged care jargon. Visit: eldernet.co.nz/Resources/Glossary

Māori language

Along with English, Māori is an official language in New Zealand. You will probably hear some Māori words being used around you in everyday conversation, including in the workplace. Some signs in New Zealand are written in both English and Māori. You may see signs in both languages in your workplace too.

Here are some common Māori words that you may hear.

Māori	English translation
Aroha	Compassion, tenderness, sustaining love
Ata mārie / Mōrena	Good morning
Awahi	To embrace, hug
Haere mai	Welcome! Enter! Come here!
Ka pai	Good, no problem, that is fine
Kai	Food, meal
Kaiāwhina	Support worker, helper, assistant
Kei te pai	I am fine
Kia ora	Hello! Cheers! Thank you
Koha	Gift, present
Koro	Older man
Kuia	Older woman
Manaaki	To support, take care of
Manuhiri	Visitor, guest
Mōrena / Ata marie	Good morning
Tiaki koroheke	Aged care
Tipuna	Grandparent
Whānau	Family group

To learn more about Māori culture and language visit:

newzealandnow.govt.nz/maori



The Treaty of Waitangi

The Treaty of Waitangi is a bi-cultural partnership between The Crown (embodied by the government) and Tangata Whenua. The Treaty is the founding document of New Zealand.

Visit: newzealandnow.govt.nz/Waitangi



Māori are sometimes referred to as 'Tangata whenua' ("people of the land").

New Zealand slang

Most countries have words and phrases that only people who live there use. This is called 'slang' or 'colloquial language'.

Some New Zealand words may be hard for you to understand when you first hear them. Ask a workmate if you are not sure what something means.

Examples of New Zealand slang

Slang term	What does it mean?
Dairy	"Dairy" does not just mean dairy products in New Zealand - it also means a small shop selling groceries, newspapers and other basics
Don't muck around	Hurry up / Do it quickly
Kiwi	New Zealander
Munted	Broken

Swearing

Swearing (using rude or offensive words) is common in some New Zealand workplaces. Try not to be offended if you hear some swearing during normal workplace conversation.

Swearing does not always mean the person is angry or telling you off. Some New Zealanders swear when they are in a good mood or joking with others.

It is never acceptable to swear in front of the people you are caring for or their families.



Swearing may be harassment

If swearing is making you feel uncomfortable or is causing you distress, it may be harassment, which is against the law.

If swearing or teasing makes you feel uncomfortable, try asking the person to stop doing it. You can also speak to your supervisor about it.

Teasing and banter

In some New Zealand workplaces, workmates may tease each other in a friendly way. This type of talk is called 'banter'.

Banter is usually between people who know each other well. For example, someone may make fun of a person's new haircut in a playful and friendly way. Like swearing, teasing or banter can become offensive.

Getting English language support

Improving your English can help you in the workplace and with your settlement into New Zealand life. There is help if you need to improve your English. Some is provided by community groups.

For information on learning English and finding English classes visit: [newzealandnow.govt.nz/English](https://www.newzealandnow.govt.nz/English)

For help with workplace communication try our WorkTalk tool. Visit: worktalk.immigration.govt.nz

Discrimination, harassment and bullying

When someone treats a person unfairly because they are different from them, this is **discrimination**. It is unlawful to discriminate against anyone based on their:

- › sex, gender identity or sexual orientation
- › marital, family or employment status
- › religious or ethical belief
- › colour, race, ethnic or national origin
- › disability, age, political opinion
- › family violence experience.

When someone repeatedly behaves unreasonably towards a worker or group of workers, this is **workplace bullying**. It can lead to physical or psychological harm.

When someone repeatedly makes offensive sexual or racial comments, or behaves in an offensive way towards someone at work, this is **harassment**. Sexual and racial harassment are taken very seriously in New Zealand. Your rights are protected by the Human Rights Act 1993.

For more information visit: [employment.govt.nz/bullying](https://www.employment.govt.nz/bullying)



Here are some things you can do if you think you are experiencing discrimination, harassment or bullying at work.

- › Make a note of the incidents that offend you.
- › Talk about it with someone you trust.
- › Discuss it with your union delegate.
- › Bring it to the attention of the person doing it.
You could write to them or ask someone to talk to them on your behalf.
- › Speak to your supervisor or manager about it, eg if a workmate is bothering you.



Need help?

You can make a complaint to the Human Rights Commission.

Visit: [hrc.co.nz/enquiries-and-complaints](https://www.hrc.co.nz/enquiries-and-complaints)

Look at WorkSafe's advice on what to do if you are being bullied.

Visit: [worksafe.govt.nz/what-to-do-if-being-bullied](https://www.worksafe.govt.nz/what-to-do-if-being-bullied)

Use the free mediation service offered by MBIE – a mediator can help you and your employer to resolve the problem.

Visit: [employment.govt.nz/mediation](https://www.employment.govt.nz/mediation)

Contact your union. **Visit:**

E tū: [etu.nz](https://www.etu.nz)

New Zealand Nurses Organisation: [nzno.org.nz](https://www.nzno.org.nz)

Public Services Association: [psa.org.nz](https://www.psa.org.nz)



6. Getting to New Zealand

Explore visa options for you and your family.

If you plan to move to New Zealand for work, there are different visas that you can apply for. Each has its own rules and application process.

Which visa do you need?

Which visa you need depends on:

- › the type of job
- › your skill level
- › your level of English
- › whether your qualification is recognised in New Zealand.

Visa options for working in New Zealand

Visa options fall into two categories – Resident visas and Temporary work visas.

Visa type	These visas allow you to...
Resident visas	<p>work and live in New Zealand for as long as you like</p> <p>Example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Skilled Migrant Category <p>Visit: newzealandnow.govt.nz/smc</p>
Temporary work visas	<p>work and live in New Zealand for a set period of time</p> <p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Essential Skills Work Visa (up to 3 years, depending on the skill level of your job) › Work to Residence visas (up to 30 months, with the potential to apply for Residence after 24 months) <p>Visit: newzealandnow.govt.nz/temp</p>

To explore visa options visit: immigration.govt.nz

For information on working in New Zealand visit:
immigration.govt.nz/work



Registered nurses (Aged Care)

Registered nurses (Aged Care) have been added to Immigration New Zealand's Long Term Skill Shortage List. If you are a registered nurse and you have a permanent or long-term job offer and meet the work, qualification and other requirements, you may apply for a Work to Residence visa and then apply for residence after 24 months.

Visit: skillshortages.immigration.govt.nz

Applying for a visa

There are three main ways to apply for a New Zealand visa.

You can either:

- › complete the application form yourself
- › hire a licensed immigration adviser
- › consult a New Zealand registered lawyer, a Community Law Centre, or an authorised person who is exempt from licence requirements.

For more information visit:

newzealandnow.govt.nz/immigrationadvice

Advice for temporary workers

Temporary workers may only work within the conditions of their visa. If you come to New Zealand on a temporary visa, the conditions of your visa will specify your position, your employer and the location of your employment. Make sure you understand the requirements and processes for your visa.

If your situation or plans change, for example if you want to change your employer, you may need to apply for a 'Variation of Conditions' or a new visa.

For more information visit:

immigration.govt.nz/worksituationchanged



Temporary visas

Workers on temporary visas must leave New Zealand or apply for a new visa **before** their visa expires.



Your family needs to prepare for living in a new country.

Bringing family to New Zealand

You may be able to bring family members to New Zealand, if they meet the immigration requirements. It also depends on which visa you have and the skill level of your job.

Family members you may be able to bring are your:

- › husband, wife, civil union or de facto partner
- › dependent children **up to the age of 24** who are single with no children of their own.

Your family will need to be prepared to live in a different country and adapt to a new culture. Your employer may be able to support you better when you arrive if you let them know that you intend to bring your family to New Zealand.

For more information on bringing family visit:

newzealandnow.govt.nz/familyvisas

For more information on preparing for life in New Zealand visit:

newzealandnow.govt.nz/living-in-nz

School age children (temporary workers)

School age children of temporary workers may be issued a student visa (domestic) if the temporary visa holder is earning the New Zealand minimum annual income. It also depends on which visa you have and the skill level of your job.

To avoid any delay that could lead to having to pay international student fees for schooling, apply for a Dependent Child's Student Visa before you arrive in New Zealand.

For more information visit: newzealandnow.govt.nz/education



Help with planning

NZ Ready is a free online planning tool for people moving to New Zealand. It creates a personalised task list for you where you can add notes and check things off as you prepare for your move.

To try the tool visit: nzready.immigration.govt.nz





7. Living in New Zealand

Get prepared for living in New Zealand.

Accommodation: where will you live?

When you arrive in New Zealand you will need to find a place to live. Some options are:

- › staying with a New Zealand family (often called “boarding”)
- › staying in a bed and breakfast (B&B) or a hostel
- › flatting (sharing a house or apartment with others)
- › renting or buying a house
- › staying in accommodation provided by your employer.

To learn more about where you might live in New Zealand visit:

newzealandnow.govt.nz/regions

Renting in New Zealand

If you are renting a house in New Zealand, it is important that you know your rental rights and responsibilities. The Tenancy Services website provides videos, tools, resources and information to help you learn more about tenancy law.

The cost of renting differs depending on where you live. Generally it costs more to rent in larger cities than in smaller ones, and if you rent closer to the city centre.

Rental properties are usually unfurnished.

For more information visit: newzealandnow.govt.nz/rent



Renting advice

The Tenancy Services website has a tool to help you make decisions about where you could afford to live in New Zealand.

Visit: tenancy.govt.nz/rent-bond-and-bills/market-rent

Download the 'Renting and you' guide

The 'Renting and you' guide (available in different languages) has information on tenancy agreements and legal requirements, including things your landlord must provide, like insulation and working smoke alarms.

Visit: tenancy.govt.nz/key-rights-and-responsibilities



Heating your home

Some houses in New Zealand can be very cold, especially those in mountainous regions. Many houses are not insulated or do not have heating built into every room. You should be prepared to provide your own heating solution.

Landlords must provide ceiling and under floor insulation in all rental homes where it is reasonable and practical to install.

To ensure your accommodation is warm, dry and safe:

- › dry your clothes outside
- › open windows each day to air the rooms
- › use extraction fans when cooking and showering
- › open curtains during the day to let in the sun and close them at night to keep in the warmth.



Be prepared for cold weather in New Zealand.

Cost of living

People new to New Zealand can be surprised by the high cost of goods and services here. However, the cost of living in New Zealand compares well with other OECD countries.



Try the Cost of living calculator

Use the Cost of living calculator to find out what it might cost to live in New Zealand.

Visit: newzealandnow.govt.nz/costs

Driving in New Zealand

Driver licence requirements

To drive in New Zealand, you must have either a current driver licence from your home country or a New Zealand Driver licence.

You can drive in New Zealand on your foreign driver licence for 12 months after arrival. After that, you must apply for a New Zealand driver licence.

You may need an international driving permit or a translation of your licence if it is not written in English.

Visit: nzta.govt.nz/convertng-to-nz-driver-licence



NEW ZEALAND'S ROAD RULES

New Zealand's road rules are there to keep everyone safe on the roads. Here are some of the most important road rules in New Zealand.

- › Drive on the **left-hand** side of the road.
- › Everyone travelling in a car must wear seatbelts.
- › All children up to the age of 7 must use an approved child restraint.
- › All vehicles must have a current registration and warrant of fitness (WoF).
- › All drivers must carry their driver licence when driving.
- › It is illegal to use a handheld cell phone (mobile phone) while driving.
- › All cyclists must wear a cycle helmet.

For more information on driving requirements in New Zealand visit:

nzta.govt.nz/driving-on-nz-roads

nzta.govt.nz/using-child-restraints-in-new-zealand

drivesafe.org.nz/home/on-the-road



Take care when driving on New Zealand roads

- › Remember that we drive on the left hand side of the road.
- › Drive to the changing conditions, eg ice, snow, rain, wind.
- › Be extra careful driving on country roads – many are unsealed (covered in loose gravel or stones). Unsealed roads are often called 'metal' roads.

Do not drive after taking alcohol and drugs

Driving while influenced by alcohol or drugs is unsafe and can result in large fines, a driving ban and even prison.



Alcohol, drugs and driving

- › It is illegal to drive if the amount of alcohol in your blood or on your breath exceeds the legal limit.
- › It is illegal to drive while impaired by certain drugs (including some prescription medicines).

To learn more about being safe on the road visit the NZ Police website [police.govt.nz](https://www.police.govt.nz) and search for “road rules”.

Public transport

You may need to use public transport if you have no other way of getting around. Most towns and cities have a bus service and some have trains as well.

Visit: [newzealandnow.govt.nz/transport](https://www.newzealandnow.govt.nz/transport)

New Zealand’s climate

New Zealand has four seasons with different temperature ranges.

Weather and temperatures vary from region to region. It is generally warmer in the north and cooler in the south.

Differences between seasons in New Zealand

Season	Months	Temperature (Celcius)
Summer	December to February	Usually warm or hot, eg 20–30 degrees
Autumn	March to May	Getting cold, eg 15–20 degrees
Winter	June to August	Cold or very cold, eg below 0–15 degrees; there could be snow!
Spring	September to November	Getting warm again, eg 15–20 degrees

For more information on New Zealand’s regional climates visit:

newzealandnow.govt.nz/regions

niwa.co.nz/node/112151

Healthcare services

New Zealand has a publicly funded health service. If you are here on a visa that qualifies you for publicly funded healthcare, you will be eligible for these services. Note that not all services are free.

When you arrive in New Zealand, you will need to enrol or register with a GP (general practitioner). A GP is a fully trained medical doctor who can give you medical advice and refer you for further tests or specialist treatment if needed. If you need medical help and it is not an emergency, the first point of contact is a GP.

Visit:

newzealandnow.govt.nz/healthcare

newzealandnow.govt.nz/doctors



Find out if you are eligible for healthcare services

If you are **not eligible**, you should have comprehensive travel insurance that includes health insurance.

Visit: moh.govt.nz/eligibility

Your safety

New Zealand is generally a safe place to live. Crime rates are lower than in many other countries and we have low levels of corruption. There are no dangerous animals and only two rare types of poisonous spider.

Visit: newzealandnow.govt.nz/safety

But there are some unseen risks that you should know about. These include:

- › changeable weather
- › sea conditions
- › sunburn
- › natural disasters, like earthquakes.

These differences are explained below.

Weather

New Zealand weather can change very quickly. Check the weather forecast and dress for the conditions before you go out.

Visit: metservice.com/national/home



Planning a day outdoors?

It is also important to check weather conditions before doing outdoor activities like walking, cycling, hiking, swimming or boating. Always carry your cell phone, warm clothing, food and drink with you and let people know where you are going and when you expect to return.

Sunburn

The sun in New Zealand can burn your skin very quickly. Sunburn can cause skin cancer. Protect yourself from the sun, even on cloudy days.



To avoid sunburn:

- › wear a hat and light clothing that covers your skin
- › put on sunscreen (SPF 30+) where your skin is not covered (including your face)
- › wear sunglasses that wrap around your eyes.

Visit: sunsmart.org.nz

Sea conditions

In New Zealand, the sea can be cold and dangerous. Sea and weather conditions can change quickly.

If you plan to swim or fish in the sea or go out in a boat, make sure you always check the weather forecast first. Wear a life jacket and take safety equipment in your boat.

For more information visit: watersafety.org.nz



Take care when in or near water

Most drownings in New Zealand happen at beaches and when people are out in boats.

Visit: newzealandnow.govt.nz/resources/stay-water-safe



The sea in New Zealand can be cold and dangerous.

Earthquakes

New Zealand has earthquakes! These happen in some places more than others. Most earthquakes are so small you do not feel them, but they can be big and cause injuries and damage, especially in areas with lots of buildings.



Make sure you know what to do in an earthquake and have a disaster safety plan

A disaster safety plan will help you and your family cope if a big earthquake happens.

Visit: newzealandnow.govt.nz/naturaldisasters

Meeting people

People from overseas say New Zealanders are very friendly and sociable. But it can be hard to know how to meet people when you move to a new country.



HOW TO MEET PEOPLE

There are lots of ways to meet up with New Zealanders and other migrants. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- › Visit your local library – most have community noticeboards with information about community groups, sports clubs, cultural groups etc.
- › Talk to other migrants about their experiences. Meet up with your local migrant group if you have one.
- › Meet other parents through your child’s school activities or playcentre.
- › Join Neighbourly or a Meetup group.
- › Look on the community noticeboard at your local supermarket.
- › Talk to your employer about your religious needs – they may be able to help you find your closest religious community or worship centre.
- › Talk to your employer and workmates about your interests and hobbies – they may know how you can get involved in a sports club or other groups.

Try volunteering – it is a really good way to meet people, make friends and learn New Zealand English.

Visit: newzealandnow.govt.nz/volunteer

There are Meetup groups all around New Zealand where you can meet people interested in lots of different topics.

Visit: meetup.com/cities/nz

Neighbourly is a private website designed to help people in neighbourhoods to connect, share information and improve the local community.

Visit: neighbourly.co.nz

You can find more advice about meeting people on the New Zealand Now website.

Visit: newzealandnow.govt.nz/meetpeople

New Zealand law

Newcomers to New Zealand have the same rights and responsibilities as people already living here.

Everyone living in New Zealand must obey New Zealand law. New Zealand law applies to all migrants with temporary or permanent residence and to all temporary workers.



Do not put your visa status at risk

Breaking the law can put your visa status at risk, and your family's. Immigration New Zealand can require someone to leave the country if they commit a serious offence and they are not a New Zealand citizen. A serious offence is any criminal offending, including driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

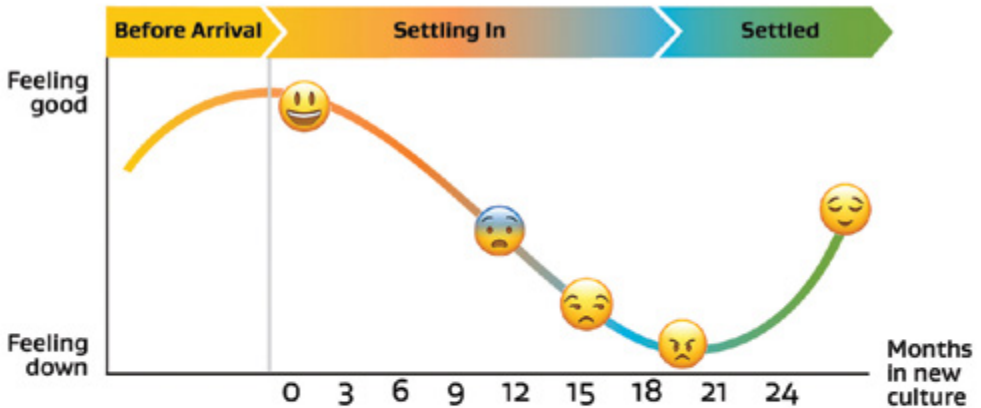
Settlement support






When you arrive in a new country, it takes time to settle. There is a lot to learn and a lot that is different. It can take quite a long time to feel settled and at home in New Zealand.

People often feel happy and positive when they first arrive but then find it harder to get settled than they expect. Over time, people learn more about the New Zealand way of doing things and start to feel at home.

Immigration New Zealand's Settlement Curve shows how your feelings may change as you start living in a new country.

The Settlement Curve



	You are excited about moving to a new life in a new country.
	You might have a bad experience, large or small, that frightens you.
	You are not sure if you want to stay – you may decide to leave.
	You fight against the bad feelings and decide to make the most of the opportunities here.
	You start to feel settled and comfortable in your new life (some people will feel settled sooner than others).

For more information about stages of settling in visit:
newzealandnow.govt.nz/settlestages



There is support for you if you feel lonely or very unhappy

There are free phone services that offer help with mental health issues. These include:

Depression Helpline: [0800 111 757](tel:0800111757)

Lifeline: [0800 543 354](tel:0800543354)

The Ministry of Health has more information on what to do in a mental health emergency and lists other helplines and support services. **Visit:** health.govt.nz/your-health

To find healthcare services near you visit the Healthcare page for your region: newzealandnow.govt.nz/regions

Information, resources and services for you

Immigration New Zealand provides settlement information, resources, programmes and services to help you settle into your new life.

Visit:

newzealandnow.govt.nz/living

newzealandnow.govt.nz/accesshelp

newzealandnow.govt.nz/languagehelp



InfoNOW...in your language

InfoNOW...in your language is a free service that makes it easy for migrants to find settlement information in their preferred language. This service is available in 17 languages with more to come. Visit the InfoNOW website for more details and contact information.

Visit: infonow.nz

Acknowledgements

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[New Zealand Government](#)