

Primary Care RN Staffing

Some information designed to assist with setting nursing staff levels in primary care.

- Currently, there are no agreed or official ratios for RN staffing levels in primary care. Relevant factors when determining these may include the following variables:
 - social deprivation index/socioeconomic factors
 - percentage of elderly patients
 - percentage of children
 - Māori or Pasifika numbers
 - chronic disease numbers
 - immunisation demand
 - telephone triage volume
 - admin workload
 - standing orders/prescribing scope
 - outreach work (workplace visits, home visits, marae clinics)
 - aged-care visits
 - RN role/functions
 - nurse prescribers
 - support staff numbers and functions
 - general practitioner (GP) and/or nurse practitioner (NP) FTE numbers.
- **Australian example:** 1 RN to each GP (Primary Health Network). Applying this for Aotearoa New Zealand, this could be 1 RN for each GP or NP. If for a high-needs situation, it could be 1.5 to 2 RNs for each GP or NP.
- **UK/NHS general practice** suggests 1 RN for every 1,800-2,500 enrolled patients. Reference: National Health Service, England. (2022). *General practice workforce planning and development toolkit*. <https://www.england.nhs.uk>.
- **Applying the NHS ratio** to Aotearoa New Zealand, this could be 1 RN for every 1,800-2,500 enrolled patients or 1 RN for every 1,000 patients for high-needs populations.
- **Appointment-capacity modelling offers another approach:** Instead of ratios, a RN is assigned 12-20 patient contacts/consultations per day depending on role/functions, e.g. immunisation clinics, cervical screening, chronic disease management, triage, care coordination, etc.

General Practice New Zealand workforce planning

A General Practice New Zealand workforce-modelling document suggests a workforce mix (including nurse FTE per population). Example modelling includes about 7.3-8.4 nurse FTE per 10,000 population, depending on need level. This equates roughly to: ~1 nurse per 1,200-1,400 patients for high-needs populations.

Reference: General Practice New Zealand. (2022). *General practice workforce discussion document*. <https://gpnz.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/Workforce-Resources-FINAL-DISCUSSION-DOC.pdf>

- Note: These are guidelines only. There are no statutory or specific regulatory guidelines or similar for Aotearoa New Zealand.

Requirements for vaccinations (see New Zealand Immunisation Handbook)

Minimum requirements:

- an authorised vaccinator present (RN, NP, doctor, pharmacist)
- a 'trained' observer (e.g. RN, EN, HCA, PCA, or admin trained in first aid emergency response).

NURSES SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND *Te Kāhui Tapuhi o Aotearoa & Te Uniana o NSNZ*



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