

# Proposed Changes to Watercare's Vaccination Policy

20 October 2021

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# Overview

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# Purpose of this pack

- This pack contains information relating to Watercare Services Limited's (WSL) proposal to implement a COVID-19 vaccination policy
- The changes outlined in this pack are at proposal stage only. It is intended to be used as a platform for further discussion
- Your input and feedback is important and we strongly encourage you to review the proposal and provide feedback
- We have undertaken risks assessments which are available to review in Watercare's COVID-19 information site.
- As part of the consultation process, we are asking for your feedback on the assessments and will also engage with our employee Health & Safety Committees and our union partners for feedback
- The feedback that you provide during this consultation process will help to inform Watercare's approach regarding the requirement for any individual entering a Watercare site to be vaccinated against COVID-19
- We recognise that this may create uncertainty for some people, and encourage you to talk to your manager, your People & Capability Business Partner, our Employee Assistance Provider – OCP, or a trusted Medical Professional for additional support

# Reasons for change

- Keeping our people safe at work is our top priority. Vaccination remains one of the best protections against COVID-19 and the impact of ongoing restrictions. Getting vaccinated means, you are far less likely to get really sick and have to go to hospital if you catch COVID-19. You are also less likely to pass COVID-19 on to other people.
- The proposed Policy aims to provide our employees and customers with clarity regarding using vaccination as a tool to protect against COVID-19 in our workplace
- Vaccination is our best protection against the adverse impacts of COVID-19. The vaccine reduces the potentially serious health impacts ensuring
  - operational continuity of our business as an essential service providing critical water and wastewater services to our customers and communities
  - reduced disruption to the service we provide to the community
  - and significantly limits the spread of COVID-19 particularly where people have contact and interact with each other

# Proposed changes

## What is being proposed

- We are proposing that anybody entering a Watercare site must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19
- Fully vaccinated against COVID-19 is defined as having received two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine (currently in New Zealand this is the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine)

# What do these proposed changes mean for me?

## Who would be impacted by these proposed changes

- Anyone entering a Watercare site. This includes;
  - Employees
  - Contractors
  - Visitors/Public

## Which sites would this apply to

- All Watercare sites. This includes;
  - Plants
  - Depots
  - Newmarket Office
  - Construction sites
  - Temporary sites established by our teams working in the field e.g., maintenance, sampling

## When would these changes come into effect

- We are proposing everyone entering our sites will be required to have at least their first dose by 15 November 2021 and fully vaccinated by 1 January 2022

# What do these proposed changes mean for me

## What if I am unable to access a site if I'm not vaccinated or don't provide proof of vaccination

- If the proposal goes ahead and you are unable to access the site because you choose not to receive the vaccine, are not able to get the vaccine, or do not provide proof of having received the vaccine, we will work through what this means for you on an individual basis
- There are a range of options that may be available, and these are likely to differ depending on your role and individual circumstances
- Ultimately, if you remain unvaccinated and are not able to access the workplace this may impact your ability to fulfill the requirements of your role. In these circumstances if we can't find a suitable alternative your employment may be terminated. It is important to note this would be a last resort, and we will fully explore and consider other available options in discussion with you before reaching this outcome.

# Next Steps – Consultation & How to have your say

- From today, Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> October until Monday 1<sup>st</sup> November we will consult with our employees, trade union partners and our contractors
- It is important that we engage with everyone who will be impacted and that these groups can provide feedback on this important topic
- We want everyone to be able to ask questions and to have their say
- We will facilitate drop-in Q&A sessions via Teams. These will run over several days and be open to all employees
- Virtual Q&A sessions will be held at our operational sites
- Further information is available on the [Vaccination consultation information page](#) via the COVID-19 tab on the intranet
- You can share your feedback with us via the [Vaccination consultation feedback form](#), also accessible via the COVID-19 tab
- If you have questions regarding the proposal or the consultation process, please share these with us via [enquiry covid@water.co.nz](mailto:enquiry covid@water.co.nz)
- A team will be monitoring all feedback and questions that come through daily
- At the end of the feedback period, all feedback received will be considered before a final decision is made




# Key Dates

<u>Event</u>	<u>Start Date</u>
Inform staff of intention to enter consultation	15 <sup>th</sup> October
Consultation period begins	20 <sup>th</sup> October
MS Teams drop-in sessions & virtual roadshows	21 <sup>st</sup> October – 26 <sup>th</sup> October
Consultation period ends	1 <sup>st</sup> November
Consideration of feedback	1 <sup>st</sup> November – 5 <sup>th</sup> November
Confirm outcome	8 <sup>th</sup> November
1 <sup>st</sup> vaccination requirement commences	15 <sup>th</sup> November
2 <sup>nd</sup> vaccination requirement commences	1 <sup>st</sup> January

These dates are subject to change depending on feedback received and to allow time to incorporate changes.

# Where can I access further information

- Watercare's COVID-19 information site can be accessed either through Teams by selecting the  tab or via the link on the intranet. There you will find links to
  - This document
  - Frequently asked questions
  - Risk assessments
  - A summary of the feedback received grouped by themes
  - General COVID-19 information and FAQs
  - Links to useful videos including respected medical professionals discussing COVID-19 vaccination
- For more information about the COVID-19 vaccine, please contact
  - Your trusted medical professional
  - One of Watercare's Occupational Health Nurses – Kerry Granger or Carol Roberts

# Help & Support

- We realise that any proposed change can be unsettling – if you have any questions/concerns please feel free to speak with your manager, a member of the P&C or HSW team or if our employee assistance program is available to you through OCP:
  - OCP – 0800 377 990 (confidential counselling service which is free of charge)
- If you have concerns regarding receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, please speak to your trusted medical professional such as your GP or refer to the Ministry of Health website <https://www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/covid-19-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-vaccines>