



NEW ZEALAND
IMMIGRATION

Immigration Factsheets

Health requirements

May 2021

- All non-New Zealanders coming to New Zealand must have an acceptable standard of health so as not to impose undue costs or demands on New Zealand's public health system.
- Everyone who applies for a visa to live in New Zealand for more than 12 months must provide a medical and chest x-ray certificate.
- People coming to New Zealand who intend to work, study or visit for more than six months and less than 12 months and who are from a country with a high incidence of tuberculosis must provide a TB chest screening x-ray before they can be approved. Children under 11 and pregnant women are not usually required to have an x-ray.
- Applicants are considered to have an acceptable standard of health if they are:
 - Unlikely to be a danger to public health
 - Unlikely to impose significant costs or demands on New Zealand's health and/or special education services.
 - (If they are under 21 and are applying for a student or resident visa) unlikely to qualify for Ongoing Resourcing Schemes (ORS) funding during their period of intended stay in New Zealand; and
 - Able to undertake the work or study on the basis of which they are applying for a visa, or which is a requirement for the grant of the visa.
- The following factors have no bearing on whether an applicant is unlikely to impose significant costs on health services:
 - The ability of a person or organisation to pay for health services, pharmaceuticals, or residential care which may be required
 - The ability of an applicant to gain access to the private health system
 - The applicant's possession of health insurance; and
 - The capacity of family, friends, or a charitable organisation to provide care for an applicant.

Residence class visa applications

- When making a decision on an application for a residence class visa, immigration officers must consider the application in terms of the rules and criteria set down in Government immigration instructions. The medical information that applicants supply to INZ is assessed to determine whether the applicant has an acceptable standard of health. An immigration officer may refer the medical information to an Immigration New Zealand medical assessor for an opinion. The medical assessor's opinion is provided to the immigration officer to take into account when assessing the visa application against immigration instructions.



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- Medical assessors provide medical opinions on applicants' health based on the criteria set out in INZ's immigration instructions. Medical assessors will only advise that applicants do not appear to have an acceptable standard of health in cases where applicants do not meet the health requirements outlined in immigration instructions. This includes cases where the severity of the condition is such that the cost is likely to exceed an established threshold of \$41,000 or, is likely to impose significant demands on New Zealand health or special education services. The final decision on an application is made by an immigration officer taking into account all information relevant to the application.

Temporary entry class visa applications

- Assessment of whether an applicant for a temporary entry class visa is likely to impose significant costs or demands on New Zealand's health services will take into account whether there is a relatively high probability that the applicant will need publicly funded health services during their period of stay in New Zealand including, but not limited to:
 - hospitalisation;
 - residential care;
 - high cost pharmaceuticals;
 - high cost disability services.
- People visiting New Zealand for less than six months are not generally required to provide evidence of good health. Modelling done by INZ indicates that short term visitors do not cause undue costs while in New Zealand.

Medical waivers

- Visa applicants who are assessed as not having an acceptable standard of health and whose applications meet all other requirements for approval under the relevant immigration instructions may in some cases be considered for the grant of a medical waiver. A medical waiver cannot be granted when an applicant:
 - requires dialysis treatment, or where an Immigration New Zealand medical assessor has indicated that an applicant will require such treatment within a period of five years from the date of the medical assessment; or
 - has severe haemophilia; or
 - has a physical, intellectual, cognitive and/or sensory incapacity that requires full time care, including care in the community; or
 - currently has tuberculosis (TB) (any form including pulmonary and non-pulmonary TB, Multidrug-Resistant (MDR)-TB and Extensively Drug-Resistant (XDR)-TB) and has not completed full treatment for TB as outlined in the New Zealand Guidelines for TB Treatment; or
 - has had a history, diagnostic findings or treatment for MDR-TB or XDR-TB, unless they have been cleared by a New Zealand Respiratory or Infectious Diseases specialist upon review of their file or review of the applicant as outlined in the New Zealand Guidelines for TB.



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- When considering granting a medical waiver, immigration officers consider a range of factors, including whether the applicant has close family living in New Zealand, and whether they would make an exceptional contribution to New Zealand.
- While a medical waiver may be granted for temporary entry visas in limited circumstances, this does not mean that a similar waiver would be granted if the individual was to apply for residence. This is because the decision on whether to grant a waiver will take into account the length of the visa and the likely costs involved over that period of time.

Eligibility for publicly funded health care

- The eligibility for publicly funded health care is set by the Ministry of Health. There are a number of ways in which people can be eligible for publicly funded health and disability services, and one is if they hold a work visa that either:
 - entitles them to remain in New Zealand for two years or more (work visas start on the person's first day in New Zealand) OR
 - entitles them to remain in New Zealand for a period of time which, together with the time that person has already been lawfully in New Zealand immediately prior to obtaining the visa, equals or exceeds two years.

This means that a person on the second of two consecutive one-year work visas is eligible for publicly funded health care from the commencement of their second visa.

- All visitors coming to New Zealand are strongly encouraged to hold comprehensive travel insurance, including medical cover, to protect themselves against a range of risks. There are some visa categories that specifically require an applicant to hold medical insurance as a condition of their visa, including workers coming to New Zealand under the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme, students and a number of working holiday schemes.
- It would be impractical to require all temporary visa holders to hold insurance and such a requirement would not prevent people taking out insurance then cancelling it once their visa had been granted. Any pre-existing conditions may also not be covered which reduces the value that insurance may have as a proxy for good health.

Ongoing Resourcing Scheme

- The Ongoing Resourcing Scheme (ORS) provides support for students with the highest ongoing levels of need for specialist support. The scheme enables them to attend school and participate alongside other students.
- The Ministry of Education (MoE) assesses whether an applicant would be eligible for ORS funding in cases where INZ requests advice on this matter. The MoE takes into account the applicant's physical, intellectual, or sensory condition and their use of language and social communication to determine whether they would be entitled to ORS funding.
- Where the MoE has advised INZ that there is a relatively high probability that the applicant would be entitled to ORS funding, the following factors have no bearing on whether an applicant is unlikely to impose significant costs on special education services:
 - the ability of a person or organisation to pay for education services, or
 - the ability of a person to provide in-home education services.

Obesity

- INZ needs to ensure that people accepted into the country for longer than 12 months have an acceptable standard of health.
- Further investigations about applicants' health are usually triggered when they have a high Body Mass Index (BMI) (e.g. a level of over 35) and / or have other associated obesity related conditions.
- It would be unusual for obesity as a condition on its own to cause an applicant to fail health screening requirements, but INZ's medical assessors have to consider to what extent there might be indications of future high-cost, and high-need demand for health services by referring to New Zealand guidelines such as the Ministry of Health's Clinical Guidelines for Weight Management of New Zealand adults.
- INZ must balance the interests of migrants and employers with protecting health resources for New Zealanders. INZ is very mindful of the need to recruit highly skilled people from overseas to work in areas where there are serious skill shortages. But we would be failing in our responsibility if we did not take into account all the facts in every case and carry out a range of health checks.
- Our systems need to be thorough, comprehensive and robust and all migrants must have an acceptable standard of health so as not to impose costs and demands on New Zealand's health services.
- INZ is obliged to consider a variety of factors and to balance a person's health status against the potential benefits they may bring to New Zealand.