

Head Medical

General Practitioners' Guide to Living & Working in New Zealand





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Congratulations on making the decision to consider living and working in New Zealand.



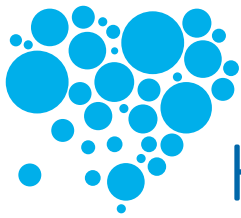
New Zealand is a land of extremes from the sub-tropical north to the glaciers of the south, encompassing beautiful green countryside, wild surf beaches, volcanic peaks, national parks, mountains, stunning wildlife and fabulous cities along the way. The people of New Zealand are famed for their relaxed and friendly approach.

New Zealand is frequently recognised as a country which has one of the highest qualities of life in the world, featuring prominently in most worldwide quality of living surveys. The country offers a safe and green environment with healthy lifestyle options as well as being a modern and exciting place to live. NZ proudly promotes its clean technology developments, health IT and alternative sustainable energy production all of which are contributing to its healthy economy, bringing global attention and investment to the country and allowing NZ based companies to partner with industry leaders around the globe.

People flock to New Zealand from all locations and from all walks of life. The country is characterised by a relatively young and growing population and relatively high levels of inbound migration (mainly from the UK, Asia and the Pacific). With four-fifths of European ethnicity, 1 in 7 the indigenous Māori, 1 in 15 Asian and 1 in 16 of Pacific Island origin, New Zealand is an increasingly multicultural society that appeals due to its diversity, laid-back way of life and temperate climate.

Compared to Australia the registration and immigration process is shorter (3–6 months versus 6–9 months minimum) and there are also no restrictions as to where a Doctor can work (you are not required to work in an ‘area of need’) – giving you the best possible choice of vacancies and locations available. Six month contracts are available, although many employers prefer a commitment of 12 months and of course it’s also possible to find a permanent job for those who seek a long term move.





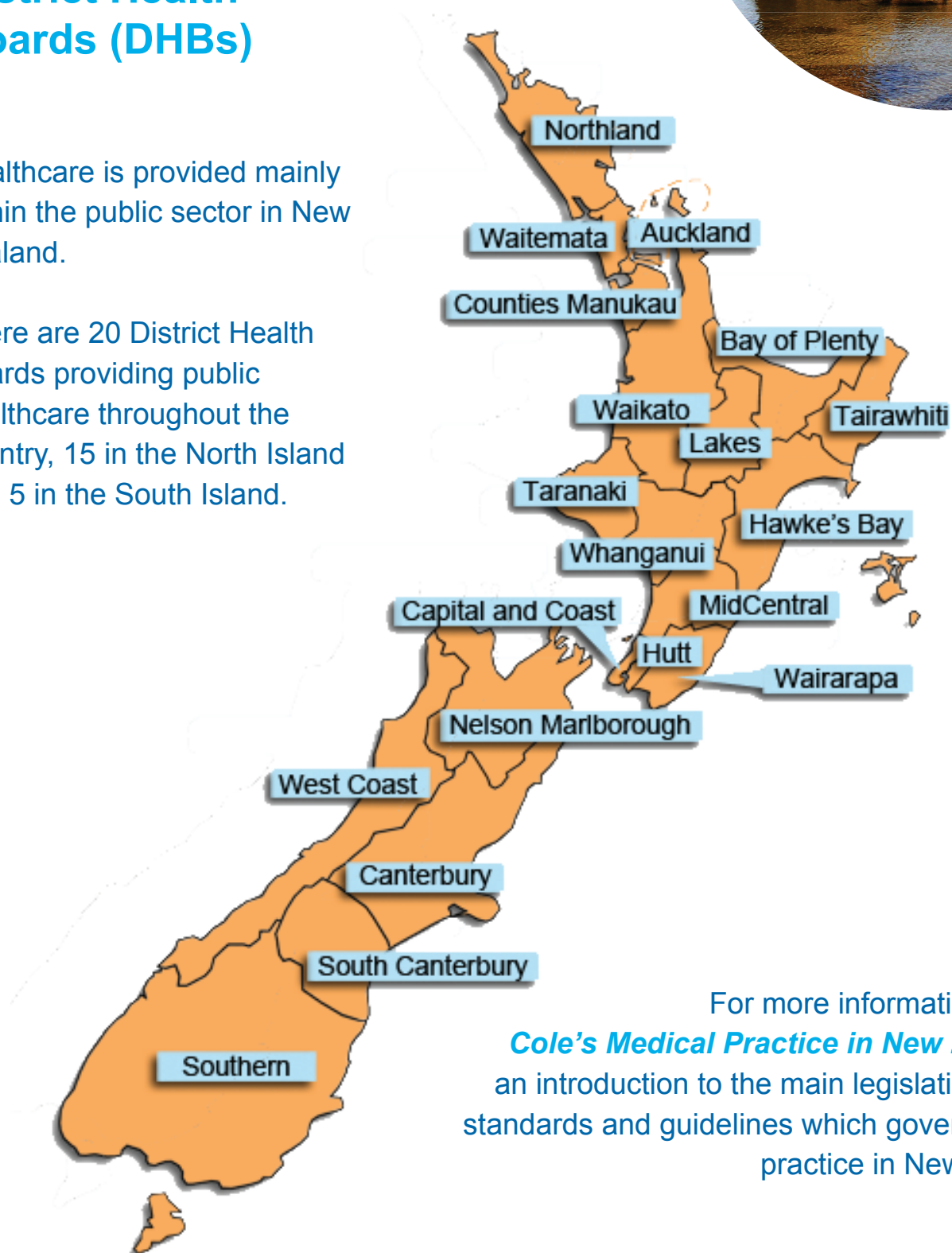
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Working in NZ

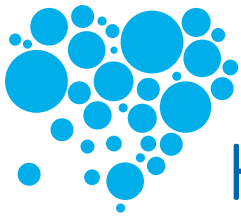
District Health Boards (DHBs)

Healthcare is provided mainly within the public sector in New Zealand.

There are 20 District Health Boards providing public healthcare throughout the country, 15 in the North Island and 5 in the South Island.



For more information refer to ***Cole's Medical Practice in New Zealand*** – an introduction to the main legislation, ethical standards and guidelines which govern medical practice in New Zealand.



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Healthcare System

Primary healthcare, including general practice, out-patient services, and prescriptions, is funded by a combination of public subsidy and private contributions. A visit to the Doctor will cost around \$45 - \$60 during the week and more after hours. Many New Zealanders purchase private health insurance in order to receive care in private hospitals and to avoid waiting lists for the treatment of non-urgent medical conditions. People with private health insurance are still eligible for free public health benefits. Prescriptions are subsidised.

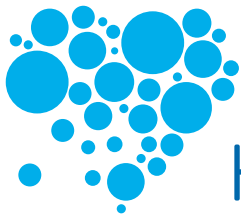
General Practitioners provide primary, community based, comprehensive and continuing patient-centred care to individuals, families and the community. Many general practices run as private businesses, but publicly funded organisations such as community trusts, accident and emergency services or Māori health providers also employ GPs.

GPs moving to New Zealand tend to start as a salaried GP, perhaps with the option to buy into the practice or take over the practice at a later date if they want to.

Practices are part of a regional **Primary Health Organisation** (PHO) which is overseen by the correspondent District Health Board. GPs, Practice Nurses, Māori health providers and other primary healthcare providers work together to meet the health requirements of the local people, with PHOs funded according to the demographics and needs of their population.

Secondary healthcare services, including acute hospital treatment, are free to those who meet the eligibility criteria. There has been an increase in New Zealanders who have private health insurance and there are many private hospitals.





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Immigration



Head Medical employs two full time Licenced Immigration Advisors for New Zealand and once we have helped you find a job, you will be assigned to one of these Consultants who will work closely with you, both on arranging your medical registration, and your visa, or in some cases residency applications. They will always be on hand to provide advice and assistance with immigration applications, liaise with NZ Immigration, acting on your behalf, handling all requests for information, and of course, most importantly, providing you with frequent updates on the status of your application, and being on hand to answer all queries.

Just like registration, the type of visa that you require will depend on a number of factors, such as the duration of your job offer, your long and short-term intentions, the dependants you are taking and their requirements, as well as your age. The main immigration pathways are the Essential Skills, Work to Residence and Permanent Residence – Skilled Migrant categories. Depending on the application being considered, it can take between 4 weeks for a standard work visa and 3–6 months for a residency application. For more information on all three pathways, please take a look at the New Zealand Immigration Website.

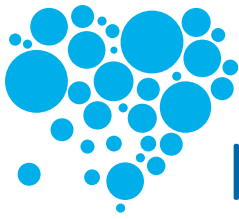
Can my family come to New Zealand with me?

Yes, your partner can go to New Zealand with you, as long as you can demonstrate that you have been living together in a genuine and stable partnership for a period of at least 12 months. Your children can also go, as long as you have the legal right to care for those children in their home country.



“I could not provide a greater recommendation than Head Medical. The organisation guide the process fully and support the applicant completely from initial contact and beyond”

Dr Richard Fisher, Psychiatrist, Northland, New Zealand



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Registration

Head Medical has an in-house regulatory consultant who will work with you to gain Medical Registration in New Zealand. After an assessment of your situation, they will provide advice to you on the most appropriate route to gain Medical Registration in New Zealand and will subsequently assist you in the preparation and lodgement of your application, acting as your representative to the [Medical Council of New Zealand](#).

In New Zealand there are no registration categories (e.g. full registration, specialist registration). Instead, Doctors are registered in a [scope of practice](#). Your scope of practice will depend on your qualifications, experience and the purpose and duration of your employment in New Zealand.

All new registrants, regardless of seniority, must work under supervision for at least their first 12 months to become familiar with the culture and health system in NZ. During this time you are registered within a provisional scope of practice and your performance will be assessed by senior colleagues.

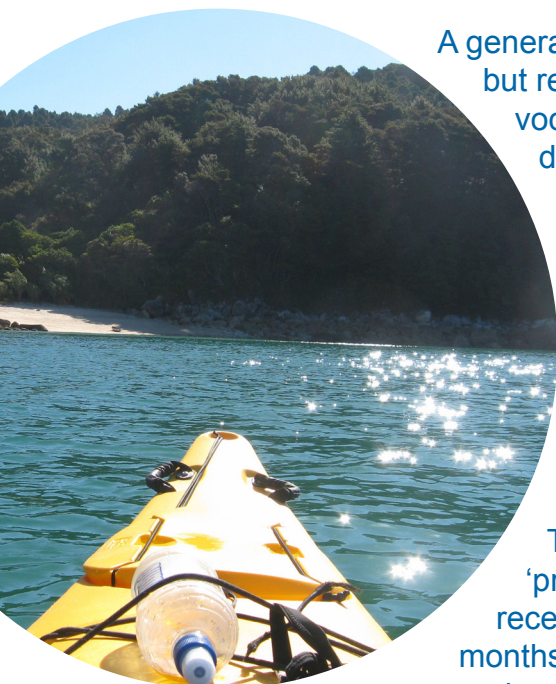
The Medical Council has specified three broad scopes of practice in which General Practitioners may be registered:

General Scope of Practice

A general scope of practice allows you to work as a GP in New Zealand, but requires that you hold an ongoing collegial relationship with a vocationally registered GP and prevents you from prescribing certain drugs and acting as a supervisor to junior or newly registered doctors.

You will initially be registered in a provisional general scope of practice, and required to work under supervision for a period of 1-2 years to qualify for registration in full general scope. During this time your supervisors will assess whether you are able to work at the standard required in the New Zealand health system.

The Council can then authorise a change of scope from a 'provisional general' scope to a 'general' scope once you have received satisfactory reports for the three runs completed (or nine months worked) immediately prior to applying for registration within a general scope, and been recommended for registration within a general scope by your supervisor.





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To become registered in a Provisional General scope of practice you must either:

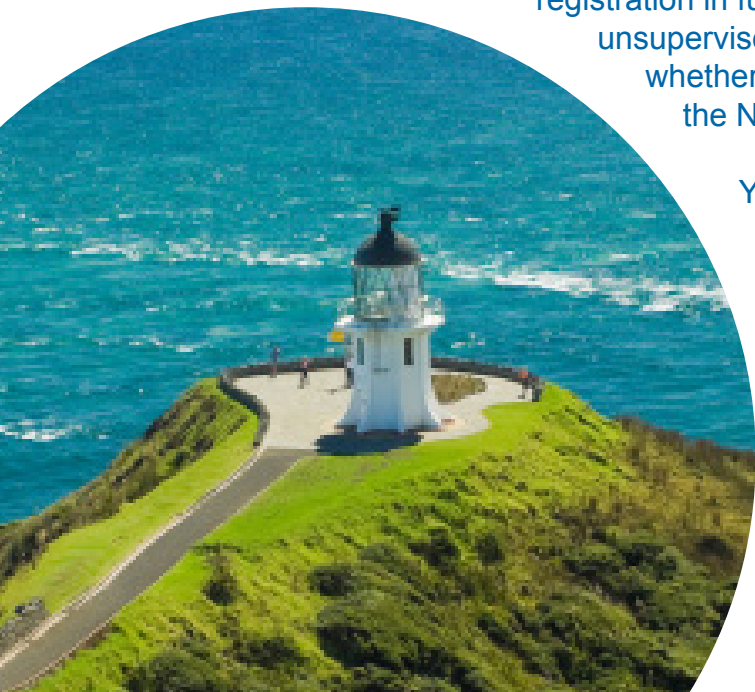
1. Hold a primary medical degree from a university medical school accredited by a competent authority, and have at least one year of general medical experience, or;
2. Hold a primary medical degree from a university medical school listed in the WHO Directory of Medical Schools or the ECFMG FAIMER Directory, and have passed USMLE Steps 1 and 2, or PLAB Part 1, or AMC MCQ, and NZREX Clinical within the last five years, or;
3. Hold a primary medical degree from a university medical school listed in the WHO Directory of Medical Schools and hold full registration and have worked for 36 months continuously (for at least 30 hours per week) during the 48 months prior to application, in a health system comparable to New Zealand as prescribed by Council

Vocational Scope of Practice

A vocational scope of practice is recognition from the Council that a doctor can:

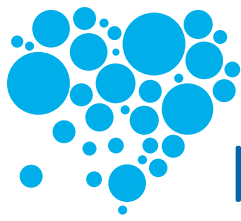
- Practice as a specialist
- Work without supervision
- Provide a collegial relationship
- Supervise doctors who hold registration within a provisional general, provisional vocational or special purpose scope of practice

You will initially be registered in a 'provisional vocational' scope of practice, where you will work under supervision for a period of 12–18 months before qualifying for registration in full 'vocational scope' and the ability to practice unsupervised. During this time your supervisors will assess whether you are able to work at the standard required in the New Zealand health system.



Your initial application will be assessed by the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) who will advise the MCNZ what, if any, other requirements you will need to meet, whilst registered provisionally, for instance a practice assessment.

To become registered within a vocational scope of general practice it is expected that you would have training, qualifications and experience equivalent to or as satisfactory as a New Zealand trained General Practitioner.



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Special Purpose Scope of Practice (maximum of 6 months)

Special purpose registration is used to gain short term registration as a locum tenens specialist for up to 6 months, during which time you will be supervised by a vocationally registered GP. In order to gain registration in a Special Purpose scope of practice you must hold one of the following approved qualifications:

- Certificate of the American Board of Family Practice
- Certificate of the American Board of Family Medicine
- Membership/ Fellowship of the Royal College of General Practitioners (If obtained after 30 September 2005 this must be accompanied by a Certificate of Completion of Training issued by the Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board)
- Membership of the Irish College of General Practitioners
- Fellowship of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners
- Fellowship of the College of Family Physicians of Canada
- Certificate of the College of Family Physicians of Canada
- Fellowship of the Hong Kong College of General Practitioners
- Fellowship of the Faculty of General Practice of the College of Medicine of South Africa
- Membership of the Faculty of General Practice of the College of Medicine of South Africa

The Medical Council of New Zealand have a self-assessment tool for registration on their website, it's well worth taking a look.

Language & IELTS

All Doctors must satisfy the requirements of the MCNZ's English Language Policy. If English is not your first language, unless you have been working in an English speaking country for three out of the last four years you will need to pass the Academic Module of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Tests can be taken regularly in test centres worldwide – please see the [IELTS](#) website for further details. There are a range of preparatory courses, practice papers and video tutorials available online.





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GP Practice

In New Zealand general practitioners provide primary, community based, comprehensive and continuing patient-centred care to individuals, families and the community. Many general practices run as private businesses but organizations such as community trusts, accident and emergency services, or Māori health providers employ GPs. In New Zealand, general practices function as teams. Most general practices employ practice nurses and reception staff and a growing number employ practice managers. Practice nurses play an important role, providing health advice and services such as immunisation, screening, diet, diabetes and asthma care. Other staff such as psychologists, social workers, physiotherapists may work in, or be associated with practices.

One point of note is that practices do not have GP Partnerships in the same way as in the UK. GPs tend to start as a salaried GP with the option to buy into the practice or sometimes have the option to take over the practice.

Many practices are now a part of a Primary Health Organisation (PHO) GPs, practice nurses, Maori health providers and other primary healthcare providers work together in PHOs to meet the health requirements of the local people enrolled in the PHO. The PHOs are funded according to the needs of their population. Essentially, this means that in poorer areas, or in areas where the population is much older or has higher health needs, the GPs and other health providers offer cheaper visits and services because they receive higher funding from the Government.

Salaries

Salaries in NZ are attractive with low taxation (the tax rate is currently capped at 33%) and no National Insurance contribution allowing for an excellent quality of life. Doctors generally report that working conditions are also very favourable in comparison, with more study and annual leave and fewer working hours, allowing for a better work/life balance. GPs tend to earn between NZ\$150,000 and NZ\$185,000. This depends on your experience and the location of the position. Often GPs will work a four or four and a half day week, with a typical 36 hour work week and a minimum of 20 days annual leave – allowing for a family friendly lifestyle. Appointment slots of 10–15 minutes are also standard practice.

Accommodation and relocation assistance will also be subject to negotiation and again each employer has their own policies. Relocation or assistance in the form of airfares, car and or housing may also be negotiated. There are occasionally retention bonuses and sign on bonuses but these tend to be in the more rural locations rather than the cities.

You may also have an opportunity to join a Superannuation scheme (where you would contribute up to the value of 6% of your gross earnings, paid into a NZ fund of your choice by your employer who will match the contributions you make. These funds are then accessible either upon your retirement or when you leave NZ). More information on Superannuation can be found at the [Emigrate New Zealand website](#).



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Living in New Zealand

Lifestyle



Whether it's indoors or outdoors, on the beach or at the theatre, on the playing fields or in the garden, New Zealand has an inexhaustible range of things to do. Most of the country's inhabitants live within half an hour's drive of the coast, so water-based activities are popular. New Zealand has many national parks and reserves, numerous ski fields and more golf courses per capita than anywhere else in the world. A comprehensive list of activities by region can be found on the [100% Pure New Zealand website](#).

Climate

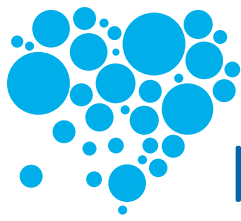
New Zealand has a temperate climate with plenty of sunshine hours. From the warm subtropical regions in the far north to cool temperate climates in the south, New Zealand's climate is dictated by two main geographical features: the mountains and

the sea. Owing to its location in the Southern Hemisphere, the seasons here are reversed (but water doesn't go down the plughole the other way...it's just a myth!). Find out more at the [New Zealand Tourism Guide](#).

Cost of Living

Good salaries, lower taxes, no National Insurance and a lower cost of living mean an excellent quality of life is easily within your means. New migrants generally find that New Zealand offers a better balance between cost of living and lifestyle than they had before. For further information, [New Zealand Now](#) and [Emigrate NZ](#) have useful web pages you can look at.





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Housing

Lots of people choose to rent a house first and then buy later. It gives you a chance to become familiar with the city or region you'll be living in before you buy.

The national median rental is around NZ\$350 per week for a three-bedroom home. As a general rule, prices are higher in the cities (Auckland being the most expensive), while prices tend to be lower in the South Island. This trend also applies when it comes to buying houses.

Houses and apartments to let/for sale can be found in local newspapers and property websites, such as:

Realestate.co.nz | TradeMe | Sella | Open2view



Education

The standard government-funded schooling system provides a comprehensive curriculum of academic, sporting and skills-based learning options. The majority of schools have their own playing fields, gymnasiums and swimming pools, and the standard of education is generally considered to be very high. The school year starts in January and finishes in December. You can choose between state funded schools, 'state integrated' schools based on religion and private schools. Schooling is free at state and state-integrated schools. Useful links include the [New Zealand Curriculum Online](#) and also [New Zealand Now's](#) educational content.



Tertiary Education

For a fully comprehensive guide to tertiary education in New Zealand, take a look at the [NZ Ministry of Education](#) website. Victoria University, the University of Otago, Massey University, the University of Canterbury, the University of Waikato and the University of Auckland were all ranked in the top 200 in at least one discipline in the [2013 QS World University Rankings](#).



Get in touch, we'd love to hear from you.

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