Working in aged care
A guide for migrants
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

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

The 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.

New Zealand data shows that, as at January 2018:

• around 16,000 staff were working 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.

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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.

Here are some examples of the types of support you might be providing as an aged care worker in New Zealand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wellbeing</strong></td>
<td>• Looking for and reporting changes in wellbeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Assisting with medication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Assisting with medical procedures and tests or physical therapy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Helping with rehabilitation after surgery, injury or illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Respite care (to give family carers a break)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Palliative care (caring for someone who does not have long to live)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mobility</strong></td>
<td>• Providing strength and balance exercise support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Moving or lifting people with limited mobility, including using special equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal care</strong></td>
<td>• Showering, toileting, cleaning teeth, brushing hair, shaving, cutting toenails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Dressing and undressing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Daily activities</strong></td>
<td>• Preparing meals and help with eating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• House cleaning (vacuuming, cleaning kitchen and bathroom floors and surfaces, washing and hanging out clothes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Shopping</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

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
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.

It is important to show respect and keep professional boundaries at work. Help is available if you need it. If you have questions or need support, you can talk to your employer or supervisor. You can also contact your union or one of the agencies listed later in 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

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

Visit: 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 the qualification is recognised by the sector.

Qualifications may need to be assessed against the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) standards. Assessment can take up to 35 days.

Visit: careerforce.org.nz/pay-equity/international-qualifications

Recognition of a qualification by Immigration New Zealand as part of applying for a residence visa is not the same as NZQA assessing the equivalence of a qualification.

Internationally registered health professionals

New Zealand law requires migrant workers to be registered before they can work in some occupations.

Before you can be granted a work or residence visa, you usually need to show evidence that you hold the New Zealand registration for the job you are going to do in New Zealand.

Even if you are registered overseas as a health professional, you may need to be registered with a professional board or council in New Zealand. You may also need a current practising certificate.

If you wish to work as a nurse and you are registered overseas, contact the Nursing Council of New Zealand for information about registration.
Immigration New Zealand has more information on occupational registration.

**Visit:** [immigration.govt.nz/occupationalregistration](http://immigration.govt.nz/occupationalregistration)

The Ministry of Health has more information on professional and regulatory bodies.

**Visit:** [health.govt.nz/regulatory-bodies](http://health.govt.nz/regulatory-bodies)

**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.
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.

The Nursing Council website has more information, including application forms and guides.

Visit: nursingcouncil.org.nz/Nurses/International-registration

Working conditions in aged care

Wages

On 1 July 2018, the minimum hourly rate for care and support workers in New Zealand rose to $19.80 per hour. This 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 time or part time.
Different kinds of employment in New Zealand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Usually between 30 and 40 hours a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>Usually between 10 and 15 hours a week, but can be up to 30 hours a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual</td>
<td>Casual workers do not have regular or guaranteed hours of work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Working in a residential rest home, retirement village or and 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

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.

Community Law has a free online manual where you can find more information on Hours of work (Chapter 19).

Use this link to visit Chapter 19: goo.gl/AAWRCr
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.
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.

Visit: employment.elearning.ac.nz

Available in 14 languages

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

Visit Starting employment at: employment.govt.nz

Unions

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.

Unions covering aged care workers

The following table lists unions that cover aged care workers.
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.


Employment agreements

You must have a written employment agreement between you and your employer.

A written agreement states what you are entitled to and the conditions that you and your employer have agreed to.

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 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 hiring 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.

If you belong to a union and there is a collective agreement, you will be automatically covered by that agreement. Your employer must let you know if there is a collective agreement.

Visit Starting employment at: employment.govt.nz
Working hours

If you and your employer agree to a set number of working hours, the hours must be stated in your employment agreement. If you are on a collective agreement, the hours of work will be stated in that agreement.

Details of your working hours should include:

- the number of hours you will work per week
- your start and finish times
- the days of the week you will work.

If you are required to be available for extra work (“on call”), your contract must include guaranteed hours of work and state:

- your hours of work
- the amount of payment you will receive for times when you are on call.
Working shifts and extra hours

Your employer cannot cancel your shift without reasonable notice or compensation.

• Your employer cannot make you work more hours than you have agreed to in your employment agreement.
• If you agree to work extra hours, your employer must give you reasonable compensation (payment and/or time off) for working longer hours.

A 90 day trial period

When you start working, your employer might offer you a trial period of up to 90 days. You do not have to accept this condition, but you may put the offer of employment at risk if you do not.

If you both agree to a trial period:

• your employer must pay you during the trial period
• the details must be recorded in your written 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, if your employer harasses you or treats you unfairly because of your race, culture, colour, gender, age – this is discrimination.

All other minimum employment rights apply while you are on a trial period.
Visit Starting employment (Trial and probationary periods) at: employment.govt.nz

**Minimum pay and deductions**

**Pay**

The government reviews the minimum wage rate every year. The minimum pay for aged care workers is subject to the 2017 Pay equity settlement.

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

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

For more information on the minimum wage and deductions, visit Hours and wages at: employment.govt.nz
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.

To get an IRD number, visit: ird.govt.nz/how-to/irdnumbers/yourirdnumber.html

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.
- Their employer must also contribute an amount equal to 3% of their 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).

To find out more about KiwiSaver and whether you are eligible to join, visit: kiwisaver.govt.nz
Breaks

Working in aged care can involve shift work. Regular breaks help you to stay fresh and alert and avoid workplace accidents.

All workers are entitled to regular rest and meal breaks that provide enough time to rest, refresh and take care of any personal matters. Rest breaks are usually 10 to 15 minutes long. Meal breaks are usually at least 30 minutes long.

Your agreed pay and hours of work should cover your minimum rest breaks. Your employer does not have to pay you for your meal breaks.

Visit Hours and wages at: employment.govt.nz

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 should be allowed a break at a different time or be paid for a missed break.
Annual leave

All workers except casual workers 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 force you to exchange your annual leave for money.
• If your employment is for less than a year, your employer must pay you holiday pay when your employment ends. They must record your holiday pay as a separate amount on your pay slip.

For information on annual leave, visit Leave and holidays at: employment.govt.nz

For information on types of employee, visit Starting employment at: employment.govt.nz

Keep your employer informed

It is a good idea to 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.
## 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 shows some of the rules about public holidays and what you are entitled to.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If...</th>
<th>then...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a public holiday is on a day you would normally work</td>
<td>you are usually entitled to have the day off and still be paid for it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>you and your employer agree you will work on a public holiday</td>
<td>you are entitled to be paid at least one and a half times your hourly rate (‘time and a half’) for the hours you work on that day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| you agree to work on a public holiday and it is a day you would normally work | you are entitled to:  
  • be paid time and a half, and  
  • take another day off on full pay (an ‘alternative day’ or ‘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 should be in writing.

For more information on public holidays, including your minimum rights, Mondayisation and transferring holidays, visit Leave and holidays at: employment.govt.nz

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. The amount of leave you are entitled to must be recorded in your employment agreement.
You may be entitled to more than five days. Check your employment or collective 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.

**For more information on sick leave, visit:**
**Leave and holidays at:** [employment.govt.nz](http://employment.govt.nz)

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**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.

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**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. You can request bereavement leave when:

- an immediate family member dies. For example, your husband or wife, partner, child or elderly parent
- someone you are close to dies.
# Bereavement leave entitlements

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If...</th>
<th>you are entitled to</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a member of your immediate family dies who is your:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• husband, wife, civil union or de facto partner</td>
<td>3 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• child or grandchild</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• brother or sister</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• parent or grandparent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• husband, wife or partner’s parent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than one family member dies at the same time</td>
<td>3 days per person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a close friend dies (a non-family member)</td>
<td>up to 1 day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information on bereavement leave, visit Leave and holidays at: [employment.govt.nz](http://employment.govt.nz)

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.

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

Visit Leave and holidays at: employment.govt.nz

Leave summary

You are entitled to:

• at least four weeks of paid holiday every year
• public holidays (day off, paid extra or day in lieu)
• at least five days of paid sick leave every year
• bereavement leave if death in family
• parental leave if you have a new child.
**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.

Visit: employment.govt.nz and search for “flexible change”

**Payslips and record keeping**

Your employer must keep an accurate record of:

- the hours and days you work
- the payments you receive for your working hours
- your holiday and leave entitlements
- any annual, sick or bereavement leave you have taken.

Your employer must give you a copy of this information if you ask for it.

Visit Hours and wages at: employment.govt.nz
3. Protecting yourself from exploitation

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

If an employer treats someone unfairly at work and does not give them what they are entitled to, that is workplace exploitation.

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.

Visit: immigration.govt.nz/exploitation to see some examples

Ways to get help

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

Talk to your supervisor, employer or union representative. They may be able to help you or direct you to someone who can.
MBIE Contact Centre

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) provides confidential help and advice on employment issues, pay and holidays.

Call the MBIE Contact Centre on: 0800 20 90 20

MBIE Mediation service

If you have a dispute with your employer you can use MBIE’s free mediation service to help resolve it.

Visit Resolving problems at: employment.govt.nz

Citizens Advice Bureau

The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) provides free advice on dealing with complaints and disputes.

Visit: cab.org.nz

Community Law

If you need free legal advice, Community Law may be able to help.

Visit: communitylaw.org.nz

Unions

Unions can help you with issues of exploitation and help ensure you are being treated fairly. They can also negotiate with your employer on your behalf.
**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 at home or at work. 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:** [eapservices.co.nz/services/employee-assistance-programme](http://eapservices.co.nz/services/employee-assistance-programme)
The role of employment authorities

There are a number of organisations that oversee employment standards in New Zealand. We call them employment authorities. The New Zealand employment authorities can help you resolve any issues in the workplace.

There are three main authorities:

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

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.

Visit Resolving problems at: employment.govt.nz

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).

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.

Visit: employmentcourt.govt.nz
4. Health and safety

Keeping 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 controlled
- adequate facilities at work, like toilets, washing facilities and first aid equipment
- free protective equipment, like disposable gloves
- safety training, information and support
- have your say on health and safety decisions
- ask for a workplace safety representative or a health and safety committee
- 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 involved in workplace health and safety.
### Everyone is responsible for health and safety

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your employer must...</th>
<th>All workers must...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>look after your health and safety and provide a safe workplace</td>
<td>know the health and safety procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>give you the training, supervision and equipment that you need to do your job safely</td>
<td>follow health and safety instructions carefully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tell you how to raise concerns or suggestions about staying safe and healthy at work</td>
<td>help keep themselves and those around them safe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your employer should provide equipment training.
Keeping you safe

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

- give you health and safety information when you start your job
- tell you about workplace hazards and how to manage them to reduce workplace injuries
- give you 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 report hazards and accidents, including a ‘near miss’
- explain how to raise concerns and suggestions about workplace 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 lists some of the hazards to be aware of.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Things that could harm you</th>
<th>Actions that could harm you</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Electrical cords</td>
<td>• Slips, trips, falls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wet floors</td>
<td>• Lifting and moving people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cleaning products</td>
<td>• Repetitive movements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Medications</td>
<td>• Using equipment incorrectly (eg hoists and wheelchairs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Some medical equipment (eg needles)</td>
<td>• Handling unsafe food in people’s homes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Infection from bodily fluids</td>
<td>• Working alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Violent or aggressive behaviour (eg due to dementia)</td>
<td>• Working late at night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Broken glass</td>
<td>• Working long hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Secondhand smoke</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 (your workplace should have one)
• ask a workmate to raise an issue for you
• contact a union delegate.

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

The Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) provides guidelines, resources and videos for the healthcare sector to prevent injuries from moving and handling people.

Use this link to find the Healthcare resources on the ACC website: goo.gl/VGD7PF

Call WorkSafe if you are worried about an unsafe or unhealthy work situation: 0800 030 040 (24 hours)

Ask for Language Line if you need an interpreter. Your concerns will be treated confidentially.

Employee Assistance Programme

The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is a free service where you can talk to an independent professional counsellor in private about problems.

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: eapservices.co.nz/services/employee-assistance-programme
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 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.

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

I show respect by not looking the boss in the eye.

I think it is rude to ask the boss questions.

I like to know exactly what I have to do and that my job is secure. I will work hard and stick by my employer.

I like to know who is in charge and who the big boss is. I do not usually address people older or more senior than me by their first name.

I am usually quiet in meetings until I am asked to speak.

I often ask direct questions as I like to get things right.

I like to call everyone by their first name. I expect to be consulted and want things to be fair.

I like to know exactly what the rules are and will stick to them and get the job done. I do not like surprises.

I do not like being told what to do all the time.

I use quite a bit of slang when I speak and often make suggestions without being asked.
Workplace communication

Keeping it clear

In aged care, it is important that you can give clear instructions and understand instructions you are given so you do not put yourself or others in danger.

It is also important that you:

• are understood by those you are caring for
• understand what they say to you.

You may not be used to the New Zealand accent. 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.
Speak more slowly if you need to

Older people can have difficulty hearing and find it hard to understand different accents. Try to remember to speak more slowly when talking to those you are caring for.

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 to challenge or question instructions if needed, and to complain sometimes, as long as it is done in a polite way.

It is also 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.

Our free online tool ‘Work Talk’ 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 the 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.
Older New Zealanders often 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 an older person or one of their family members asks for something, it may sound like a suggestion. It is important to remember this when you are talking with older people and their family members. 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 workplaces in New Zealand may use some different technical terms (jargon) from what you are 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.

The Eldernet website has some examples of terms you might hear at work. 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. The following table shows some of the Māori words you may hear or see in the aged care workplace.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Māori</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Māori</th>
<th>English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aroha</td>
<td>Compassion, tenderness, sustaining love</td>
<td>Koha</td>
<td>Gift, present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ata marie</td>
<td>Good morning</td>
<td>Koro</td>
<td>Older man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awhi</td>
<td>To embrace, hug</td>
<td>Kuia</td>
<td>Older woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haere mai</td>
<td>Welcome, enter</td>
<td>Manaaki</td>
<td>To support, take care of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To learn more Māori words, visit: newzealandnow.govt.nz/maori

**New Zealand slang**

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

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

**Examples of New Zealand slang**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slang term</th>
<th>What does it mean?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kiwi</td>
<td>New Zealander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t muck around</td>
<td>Do it quickly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munted</td>
<td>Broken</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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.

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 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

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

More than Words has lots more tips on workplace communication. Use this link to view More than Words: goo.gl/tSojrB

Discrimination, harassment and bullying

When someone treats a person unfairly because of their culture, colour, language or sexual orientation, this is discrimination.

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.
Here are some things you can do if 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 a superior about it, eg if it is a workmate.
• Use the free mediation service offered by MBIE. A mediator can help you and your employer resolve the problem.

Need help?

If you feel you are experiencing discrimination, you can make a complaint to the Human Rights Commission.

Visit: hrc.co.nz/resources

WorkSafe provides advice on what to do if you are being bullied.

Visit the Bullying prevention toolbox at: worksafe.govt.nz/bullying

Mediation is also an option.

Visit Resolving problems at: employment.govt.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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visa type</th>
<th>These visas allow you to…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resident visas</td>
<td>work and live in New Zealand for as long as you like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Example: Skilled Migrant Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visit: newzealandnow.govt.nz/smc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary work visas</td>
<td>work and live in New Zealand for a set period of time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Example: Essential Skills Work Visa (up to 5 years, depending on the skill level of your job)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Visit: newzealandnow.govt.nz/temp</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You can explore work visa options on Immigration New Zealand’s website.

**Visit:** immigration.govt.nz/new-zealand-visas/options/work
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.

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 could bring must be your:

- husband, wife, civil union or de facto partner
- dependent children up to the age of 24. They must be 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 family visas and bringing family, visit:**
newzealandnow.govt.nz/familyvisas

**For 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.

Visit: newzealandnow.govt.nz/education

NZ Ready

NZ Ready is a free online planning tool for people moving to New Zealand. It creates a 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:

• boarding with a New Zealand family
• 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-nz

Renting in New Zealand

If you rent 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.

**Visit:** [newzealandnow.govt.nz/rent](http://newzealandnow.govt.nz/rent)

The ‘Market rent calculator’ on the Tenancy Services website can help you when making decisions about where you could afford to live in New Zealand.

**Visit:** [tenancy.govt.nz](http://tenancy.govt.nz)

The ‘Renting and you’ booklet (available in different languages) has information on tenancy agreements and legal requirements, including insulation.

**Use this link to download the booklet from the tenancy.govt.nz website:** [goo.gl/cLLPHe](http://goo.gl/cLLPHe)
Heating your home

Some houses in New Zealand can be very cold, especially those in southern 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.

From 1 July 2019, landlords must provide insulation in all rental homes.

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

Things might be more expensive in New Zealand than you expected.

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.

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

All migrants must have a current driver licence from their home country to drive in New Zealand.

You can drive in New Zealand on your foreign driver licence for 12 months. After that, make sure you 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: newzealandnow.govt.nz/nz-licence
New Zealand’s driving rules

New Zealand’s driving rules are there to keep everyone safe on the roads. Some of the most important driving rules in New Zealand are:

• drive on the **left-hand** side of the road
• everyone in the car must wear seatbelts
• carseats (child restraints) are compulsory for children up to the age of 7
• all vehicles must have a current registration and warrant of fitness (WoF)
• carry your driver licence with you whenever you drive
• do not use a handheld cell phone (mobile phone) while driving – it is illegal
• all cyclists must wear a cycle helmet.

Visit:
[police.govt.nz](http://police.govt.nz) and search for “being safe on the road”
[nzta.govt.nz](http://nzta.govt.nz) and search for “child restraints”
[drivesafe.org.nz/home/on-the-road](http://drivesafe.org.nz/home/on-the-road)

Laws are made to keep you safe

• A current Warrant of Fitness ensures that your vehicle is safe.
• Wearing a cycle helmet is a legal requirement and reduces the chance of a head injury in an accident.
Do not drive after taking alcohol or 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).

**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.

**Difference between seasons in New Zealand**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>When is it?</th>
<th>Temperature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>December to February</td>
<td>usually warm or hot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td>March to May</td>
<td>getting cold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>June to August</td>
<td>cold or very cold; there could be snow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>September to November</td>
<td>getting warm again</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For more information on New Zealand’s weather and climate, visit:

newzealandnow.govt.nz/regions-nz

niwa.co.nz/education-and-training/schools/resources/climate/overview

**Health care services**

New Zealand has a publicly funded health service. If you are here on a qualifying visa, you will be eligible for publicly funded health services. (Not all services are free.)

**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](http://moh.govt.nz/eligibility)

**Your safety**

New Zealand is generally a safe place to live. There are no dangerous animals and only two rare types of poisonous spider. But there are some differences you should know about that can put your safety or wellbeing at risk. These include:

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

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

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.

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 is cold and it can be 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.
Be careful when in or near water. Most drownings in New Zealand happen at beaches and when people are out in boats.

For tips on water safety, visit:
newzealandnow.govt.nz/resources/stay-water-safe
watersafety.org.nz

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 you 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.
Ideas for 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, such as sports, arts or cultural groups.
• Talk to other migrants about their experiences.
• Meet other parents through your child’s school activities.
• Join a Meetup group.
• Look on the community noticeboard at your local supermarket.
• Connect with new people through your religious community or local church.
• Talk to your employer and workmates about your interests and hobbies – they may know how you can get involved.

Try volunteering – it is a really good way to meet people, make friends and learn Kiwi 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

You can find more advice on our 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.

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 feel 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 emotions may change as you start living in a new country.

**The Settlement Curve**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling good</th>
<th>Feeling down</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>😄 You are excited about moving to a new life in a new country.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>😞 You might have a bad experience, large or small, that frightens you.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>😞 You are not sure if you want to stay - you may decide to leave.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>😞 You fight against the bad feelings and decide to make the most of the opportunities here.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>😊 You start to feel settled and comfortable in your new life (some people will feel settled sooner than others).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Image of the Settlement Curve with months in new culture ranging from 0 to 24]
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/settlestages
newzealandnow.govt.nz/accesshelp

A copy of this guide is available online. Visit: newzealandnow.govt.nz/agedcare
Acknowledgements

This guide was collaboratively developed with the following organisations: