

Analysis: COVID-19 vaccine uptake for disabled people

December 2021

Approach

When people are vaccinated, only information necessary to match their vaccination to their health record is collected – people are not asked whether they are disabled.

The Ministry of Health asked the Social Wellbeing Agency to create a disability indicator using the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) and look at vaccinations for disabled people. We matched COVID-19 vaccine data with datasets within the IDI, which is anonymised.

We can estimate that there are about 1.2 million disabled people. We can see how many people in this group are vaccinated, but not who is or is not. There are strict laws about using this information; we cannot identify individuals or contact people using this data.

Vaccination data enters the IDI every two weeks – these findings are as of **30 November 2021**.

Our analysis focused on non-vaccination to help the vaccine rollout by showing where more support was needed. The attached graphs on **non-vaccination** informed the insights in this info sheet.

Creating a disability indicator

We created the disability indicators based on the Washington Group Short Set (WGSS) in the IDI. We used a variety of sources to identify people with functional disabilities in line with the WGSS questions - *Walking, Seeing, Hearing, Remembering, Washing, and Communication*.

This methodology estimated approximately 1.2 million disabled people.

The Social Wellbeing Agency worked on this methodology with the Ministry of Health. Defining disability for the uses of data will never be perfect because there are many lenses to a disability, but this is a massive step for providing helpful information to the disabled community. Our approach aligns with the 2019-2023 Disability Action Plan.

Key insights

- 90% of disabled people have received at least one dose of the vaccine, compared to non-disabled (83%)
- 84% of Māori disabled and 85% of Pacific disabled have had at least their first dose, compared to Māori (74%) and Pacific (79%) non-disabled people.
- Auckland DHBs have the highest vaccination rates for disabled people in the country (92%)



Types of impairment

We categorised our overall disability indicator:

- 0 if no functional difficulty;
- 1 if an individual has at least one functional difficulty classed as high, but none classed as very high; and,
- 2 if an individual has at least one functional difficulty classed as very high.

People with a disability or impairment in the **1** category have higher rates of receiving at least one dose of the vaccine than **2**

We can see in the data that more disabled people with complex needs have slightly lower vaccination rates than those with less difficulty (88.6% vs 90.2%).

However, disabled people living in residential care facilities have incredibly high rates (94.9%) of having received at least one dose of the vaccine.

Hearing or remembering

Rates of non-vaccination for the overall disabled population is low. However, the biggest gaps are observed among those with hearing and remembering difficulties.

People with hearing difficulties are **less likely** to have had at least their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine than the overall disabled population but still are 5.5 percentage points ahead of non-disabled people.

People with remembering difficulties have similar levels of having at least one dose as non-disabled people.

Ethnicity

Vaccination rates for Māori and Pacific disabled people are still climbing, not slowing as we see in other populations. In some DHB areas, these rates are accelerating.

84% of Māori disabled and 85% of Pacific disabled have had at least their first dose, compared to Māori (74%) and Pacific (79%) non-disabled people

DHBs

All DHBs are making significant progress with vaccinations for disabled people (see graphs). For some DHBs (i.e. Tairāwhiti, Southern), we are witnessing Māori and Pacific disabled people still getting vaccinated at a steady rate. Vaccinations rates are accelerating.

Auckland DHBs have the **highest vaccination rates** for disabled people in the country (92%)

Learning impairments and people who are autistic

We also estimated vaccination rates for people with learning (intellectual) impairments (ID) and autistic people.

Overall, individuals with learning (intellectual) impairments or who are autistic have vaccination rates broadly in line with the non-disabled population (84.6% and 85.3%). But there are pockets within these communities who are still lagging, e.g. younger people (12 to 24-year-olds) with learning (intellectual) impairments (81.6%).