

Updated analysis: COVID-19 vaccine uptake by disabled people

May 2022

Background

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. The agency has developed disability indicators based on the Washington Group Short Set (WGSS) in consultation with the Ministry of Health and Office for Disability Issues.

The indicators use a variety of sources of information to identify people with functional disabilities in line with the WGSS questions - *Walking, Seeing, Hearing, Remembering, Washing, and Communication*. For more information about the WGSS, please see [here](#).

The indicators estimated approximately 1.2 million disabled people aged 5 and over.

For full detail of this analysis, read [Vaccination uptake analysis of disabled population aged 12 and over as of 1 March 2022](#).

Key insights as of 29 March 2022

- 92% of disabled people aged 5 and over had received at least one dose of the vaccine, compared to 85% of non-disabled people.
- 87% of Māori disabled and 89% of Pacific disabled people have had at least their first dose, compared to Māori (75%) and Pacific (80%) non-disabled people.
- Disabled people living in residential care facilities had the highest rates of having received two or more doses of the vaccine (96%).

5 to 11-year-olds

5 to 11-year-olds have been eligible for a COVID-19 vaccination since 17 January 2022 and can receive a second dose after 8 weeks.

The overall difference between disabled and non-disabled people in terms of vaccination uptake was less pronounced for 5 to 11-year-olds with 57% of disabled children vaccinated compared to 55% of non-disabled children.

However, for Māori the difference is significant with 43% of disabled Māori 5-to 11-year-olds vaccinated compared to 35% of non-disabled Māori children.

District Health Boards

Auckland and Capital and Coast DHBs had the highest vaccination rates for disabled people in the country (94% and 95%, respectively).

Northland DHB had the lowest rates of vaccination for disabled people of all ages (87%). It also had the largest difference between disabled and non-disabled people with 75% of non-disabled people vaccinated.

Functional difficulties

Although the disabled population on the whole has high vaccination rates, there are groups within this community with relatively lower vaccination rates.

Children aged 5 to 11-years-old with hearing or walking difficulties were slightly less likely to be vaccinated compared to their peers with difficulty washing or seeing (53%, 54%, 57%, and 60%, respectively).

Among adults aged 25 to 64, individuals with difficulty washing, remembering, and communicating were marginally less likely to be vaccinated compared to their peers with other functional difficulties (90% compared to 91% for walking, and 92% for hearing and seeing).

Differences in vaccination uptake between functional difficulty groups diminish with age. This suggests that as an individual ages, their functional difficulty may be less of a feature in their vaccination uptake decisions.

Health system engagement

93% of disabled people who were enrolled with a Primary Health Organisation in 2021 were

vaccinated compared to 62% of disabled people who were not enrolled that year.

Similarly, 94% of disabled people who visited a GP at least once between 1 June 2020 and 1 June 2021 were vaccinated compared to 82% of disabled people with no observed GP visit.

Our analysis suggests that **an established relationship with a health professional is a key factor** in vaccine uptake for children and adults.

Socioeconomic deprivation

Another important determinant of vaccination uptake appears to be socioeconomic need, with 90% of disabled individuals living in high deprivation areas (NZ Deprivation Index = 8-10) being vaccinated compared to 94% of disabled people in low deprivation areas (NZDep = 1-3).

Disabled individuals aged 12 and over receiving main benefits or living in social housing were also less likely to be vaccinated than those not accessing these services (87% and 89% compared to 94% and 93%, respectively).

Other health conditions

We also estimated vaccination rates for people with learning (intellectual) impairments (ID) autism spectrum disorder (ASD), or a serious mental health illness.

Overall, disabled individuals aged 5 and over with one of these health conditions were less likely to be vaccinated than their disabled peers without the health condition. The differences were particularly large for disabled people with ASD, 80% of whom were

vaccinated compared to 92% of disabled people without ASD.

Those 25 and over with serious mental illness and ASD were 3 and 2 percentage points less likely to be vaccinated (respectively), relative to disabled people without these conditions.

For disabled 5 to 11-year-olds, serious mental illness was associated with a higher rate of vaccination, whereas children with ASD or ID were significant less likely to be vaccinated (5 percentage points).

These results are not official statistics. They have been created for research purposes from the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) which is managed by Stats NZ. For more information about the IDI please visit [this](#) page.