

# Briefing

## Maximising uptake of COVID-19 vaccines in Tier 1

**Date due to MO:** 10 February 2021 **Action required by:** 12 February 2021 IN

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**Security level:** CONFIDENCE **Health Report number:** HR 20210182

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**To:** Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister for COVID-19 Response

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### Contact for telephone discussion

Name	Position	Telephone
Maree Roberts	Deputy Director-General, System Strategy and Policy	s 9(2)(a)
Dr Ashley Bloomfield	Director-General of Health	s 9(2)(a)

### Minister's office to complete:

- Approved  Decline  Noted  
 Needs change  Seen  Overtaken by events  
 See Minister's Notes  Withdrawn

Comment:

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# Maximising uptake of COVID-19 vaccines in Tier 1

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**Security level:** IN CONFIDENCE **Date:** 10 February 2020 Hon Chris

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## Purpose of report

1. This report sets out advice on how to maximise uptake of COVID-19 vaccines by people included in Tier 1 under the COVID-19 Immunisation Sequencing Framework (Sequencing Framework) for who should receive COVID-19 vaccines first when supplies are limited. Tier 1 of the Sequencing Framework includes border and Managed Isolation and Quarantine (MIQ) workforces, and their household contacts (see Appendix One for further information).

## Summary

2. High uptake of the COVID-19 vaccines, particularly within the border and MIQ workforce is vital. Providing these workers and their household contacts with access to a COVID-19 vaccine as early as possible is another way we can help keep them safe while they continue their important work to keep New Zealand safe.
3. Given the risk that the border and MIQ workforce faces, we consider it likely that many will be motivated to receive COVID-19 vaccines. This will be consistent with the expectation that, in order to work in this high-risk workforce, these workers should be vaccinated.
4. Our strategic and multi-faceted approach will help to maximise vaccine uptake by border and MIQ workforces. This approach focuses on stakeholder engagement, communications and service design to reduce barriers to immunisation and get as many people vaccinated as possible, including options to address potential financial barriers to vaccine uptake.

s 9(2)(h)



6. This supports employers to undertake risk assessments about who may carry out higher-risk duties on the reasonable public health position that vaccination will reduce the risk of transmission and protect employees, in combination with other measures.

57. Agencies also consider that there could be an argument for a leave support scheme that compensates for time off due to adverse reactions for up to a week, rather than time off to receive vaccinations. Severe adverse reactions are currently very rare, with current data suggesting severe adverse reactions is less than 1.1 percent.

*Support schemes have timing and cost implications*

58. The timing of when any of these options may need to be implemented by will also affect their level of granularity/complexity, and how well-targeted they are at potential barriers. For example, the trigger for existing payment support schemes is relatively straightforward (eg, having COVID-19 or needing to stay home following a COVID-19 test). By comparison, the trigger for any vaccine leave support scheme would either be an inability to access vaccination outside working hours, or an inability to use paid sick leave for adverse reactions. Creating a scheme that can differentiate between people who have met these conditions from those who have not, and potentially pay workers rather than employers, will take time. If a payment scheme needs to be implemented in the next month, it may end up having broader application than actually needed to achieve behaviour change (in terms of encouraging uptake).

59. In the time available, officials have been unable to calculate the potential cost and benefit of each option or obtain information about other countries' policies in this area. We would seek to do this as part of further work on any options.

60. Very indicative costings of a financial support scheme (excluding administration costs) to support vaccination of people in Tier 1 are as follows:

<i>Tier/number of people</i>	<i>Payments to support time off to receive vaccination</i>	<i>Payments to support time off in case of adverse reactions</i>
Tier 1a (MIQ/border workers) 12,600 people	<p><b>\$882,000 (excl. admin costs)</b></p> <p>Assumptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Half of the people in this tier need support to access vaccination during work hours</li> <li>• Four hours needed to travel to and from a regional hub, and to receive vaccination</li> <li>• Two doses needed</li> <li>• Payment rate of \$70 for four hours away from work (based on LSS and STAP rates)</li> </ul>	<p><b>\$48,650 (excl. admin costs)</b></p> <p>Assumptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1.1% of people receiving vaccination experience serious reactions of any type</li> <li>• Two doses needed</li> <li>• Of those, half need time off work as a result of serious reactions</li> <li>• Up to a week needed off work (if more than a week, an ACC claim can be made)</li> <li>• Payment rate of \$350 (based on STAP rate)</li> </ul>
Tier 1b (household contacts of MIQ/border workers) 40,000 people	<p><b>\$1.4 million (excl. admin costs)</b></p> <p>Assumptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Half of the people in this tier are working</li> <li>• Of those, half need support to access vaccination during work hours</li> <li>• Four hours needed to travel to and from a regional hub, and to receive vaccination</li> <li>• Two doses needed</li> <li>• Payment rate of \$70 for four hours away from work (based on LSS and STAP rates)</li> </ul>	<p><b>\$77,000 (excl. admin costs)</b></p> <p>Assumptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Half of the people in this tier are working</li> <li>• 1.1% of people receiving vaccination experience serious reactions of any type</li> <li>• Two doses needed</li> <li>• Of those, half need time off work as a result of serious reactions</li> <li>• Up to a week needed off work (if more than a week, an ACC claim can be made)</li> <li>• Payment rate of \$350 (based on STAP rate)</li> </ul>